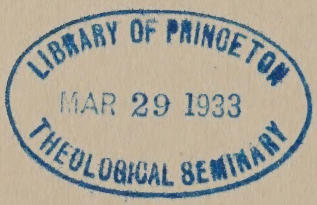
PERSONALITY IN ITS TEENS

BOORMAN



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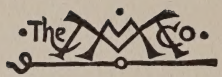

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PERSONALITY IN ITS TEENS

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BY
W. RYLAND BOORMAN
AUTHOR OF "DEVELOPING PERSONALITY IN BOYS"

NEW YORK
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1932

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Set up and printed.

SET UP BY BROWN BROTHERS LINOTYPERS
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
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TO MY SON
HOWARD LYON
WHO IS ON THE THRESHOLD
OF HIS
TEEN-AGE EXPERIENCE

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I feel bolder with a pen.
From a letter of Louis Pasteur, 1865.

PREFACE

In 1880 the high school population of this country consisted of only 110,000 boys and girls. By 1900 this number had increased to 519,000; in 1920 to 2,199,000; and at the close of 1927 probably to 4,000,000. In addition, the private secondary school enrollment in 1927 must have been considerably in excess of a quarter of a million. That is to say, almost one-half of the nation's population of teen age were attending high school institutions in 1927.

In many respects the high school group represents the most important investment made by any community. The advantages which these boys and girls receive involve considerable personal sacrifice for many parents, and lay a heavy burden on the taxpayers. This group of young people will determine the nature of community and national life in this Western hemisphere during the years to come, because of the superior fitness for leadership conferred upon it by a high school training. They have been called "the hope of the world."

No one concerned with the best interests of society can afford to neglect this group, on account of its size and potential influence. This claim for attention is reinforced by the fact that serious inroads have been made upon the traditions, which for many generations stabilized the influence of the home and

the church over these younger members. The school also has introduced many new problems by letting the scientific point of view dominate its curriculum. Then there are not so many chores to do; and the increase of leisure time, often accompanied by relatively large amounts of spending money, is leading the way to new forms of mischief. The degree to which the present generation of young people have gone mad over pleasure-hunting is disconcerting to many adults. The new freedom in the relations between girls and boys is the cause also of no little extra confusion. If there ever was a time when the members of this age-group lived a simple life sheltered from disintegrating influences, that day has passed.

The boy of whom we wish to speak may be considered as part of an age-grouping, ranging from eleven and twelve to eighteen and twenty years of age. This period is generally referred to as adolescence. It is the period of far-reaching changes in the life of every boy, due to new stages of growth physically, admission into new social groups, changes in emphases in ideals and in points of view. The high school boy also raises the question of how a person should use his leisure time. While some of these boys work after school or on Saturday, as a rule, they have all that time free for social, recreational, and personal pursuits. In addition, it might be said that high school life represents a separate life experience, which differs from that of the boy who works six days a week in a factory or on the farm.

There are distinctive features connected with a

boy's high school life which need to be studied more carefully, if teachers, parents, and social workers are to understand his personality correctly. It is not alone the magic word "education" which accounts for the value of a high school career; it is rather a number of factors—family, religious, leadership, athletic, social, vocational, etc.—which go into the re-making of the boy's childish personality. It is for the purpose of lending a hand at this interesting, but intricate business, that the church, the Young Men's Christian Association, the Boy Scouts and similar organizations arrange their programs and attempt to bring their influence to bear.

The idea of instituting the present detailed inquiry, with the object of discovering the facts responsible for the unique contribution which the Hi-Y Club [1] makes to the enrichment of the personality of its members, originated in a few striking letters from high school boys themselves. As a result, the method of extended correspondence with a group of these individuals as a source of data for personality studies was given an extensive test.

The Hi-Y movement is part of the Christian Citizenship movement among teen age boys. Its object is to "create, maintain and extend throughout the school and community, high standards of Christian character." While these group clubs of high school boys may put on athletic and social programs at times, the main purpose is devotional training and character formation. The boys who are leaders in

[1] The theory and program of the Hi-Y Club is described in detail in *The Hi-Y Tool Chest,* Association Press, N. Y. C.

this work are assembled in state camps and conferences periodically for special training and to fit them to exercise this leadership in the school more effectively.

About three hundred different high school boys participated in this experiment voluntarily, and of course with varying degrees of enthusiasm. From this number a special study was undertaken of only twenty. The data thus obtained might be evaluated first from the standpoint of determining what sides of his personality the boy discloses in the letters which he writes. Of just what value, from this angle, is data collected by correspondence? Second, this relatively vast fund of data of a more intimate and personal kind regarding life situations, interests, experiences, wishes, and attitudes should help parents, teachers, Y. M. C. A. secretaries and others who deal with boys to a better understanding of their problems and opportunities. In addition, it should provide the material required to determine the influence exerted by membership in this high school group on the personality of the boy himself.

In the third place, the light which the materials thus gathered throws in most significant ways upon many of the personality mechanisms characteristic of high school boys will afford much help in the analysis of conflict situations and group relationships, as well as an individual's "conception of his rôle" and other personality reactions. Finally, by continuing the correspondence over a period of several years with somewhat fewer boys, it was hoped that something of a graph might be drawn of actual changes in personality that went on dur-

ing this period of adolescence, measured in relation to the factors which produced them. Indeed, the original object of these studies was to supply more accurate information concerning the effectiveness of such features of work with boys, as Older Boys' Conferences, Camps, and Hi-Y Clubs in producing desirable changes in personality.

The techniques of social psychology as they apply to the process of gathering and the diagnosis of the data have been described in a previous book, *Developing Personality in Boys.* The present investigation was made possible through a special research fund set aside for that purpose by the Y. M. C. A. College, Chicago.

The interest and aid of a large group of Boys' Work Secretaries who assisted in securing contacts with the boys that enlisted were indispensable aids to the success of this research project. In addition, many of the students in the Y. M. C. A. College showed their deep interest in the project by assisting in organizing the data. I am especially indebted to Harold D. C. Kinney who, as a student assistant, was active in gathering the materials and of special assistance in the preparation of this manuscript. I was guided and assisted in many ways by my former colleague, J. Quincy Ames, and most of all do I appreciate the interest of former President Frank H. Burt in this piece of research.

W. R. B.

Chicago
July, 1930

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

THE PERSONALITY OF HIGH SCHOOL BOYS

In the high school period every normal boy wants to appear big and manly, and acquire status for himself. Frequently his love of conspicuousness sets him up to acting smart, showing off, or boasting about his exploits. In his reveries he takes almost as much enjoyment in his pictures of himself graciously escorting a girl to a party, scoring the odd point to win a basketball game, or performing the star part in a program, as if these were real events. His actual accomplishments in activities like these determine his rating by his companions who do not hesitate to let him know that in their estimation he is a sheik, a low brow, a sissy, a lady's man, an athletic star, or a bully as the case may be.

Nor is the high school boy always the same person at all times and places. The one boy may seek to appear studious in the presence of his teachers, a rowdy perhaps at the billiard parlor, and a little gentleman at home. Moreover the part which he plays in one situation may determine his status in quite a few other connections. For instance, becoming a successful athlete may determine what fraternity a boy "makes," which church he attends, or what group of girls gives him welcome. The nature

of his personality fluctuates under these changing environmental conditions.

The twenty boys under study here have been divided roughly into three groups: namely, those who occupy a place of outstanding leadership in high school life; second, those who play minor or inferior rôles in their groups; and third, those whose status is somewhat changeable and uncertain, varying from one activity or group to another. In introducing the group, the boys are numbered in the order of the value set upon their contributions. Ralph is first, Henry second, Harry third, and so on. This rating is based on four tests, namely, (1) writing style and ability to describe situations aptly, (2) amount of material, (3) variety of topics and completeness of treatment, and(4) the length of time covered by the correspondence. The comments that follow are kept brief purposely, but as the study proceeds, the personality of each boy will stand out clearly and distinctly. A reader who becomes especially interested in a certain one or two of these boys, and so desires, may unite the fragments of their stories scattered through the chapters.

Boys Who Are Leaders and Play Superior Rôles

Ralph (1)

Ralph is an American-born boy of Danish parentage and his father is an industrious, skilled workman who owns his own home. He is not a boy of brilliant ability but rather one who "gets there" by persistent hard work. While he did not become a star player, Ralph liked athletics and developed considerable

ability in swimming. Similarly he was not one of the most conspicuous leaders in high school life. He was a Boy Scout, an active Hi-Y member and fairly active in the Lutheran Church.

In high school affairs, Ralph was a non-conformist and an independent, critical thinker. This made it difficult for him to get along in groups governed by precedent, although he is a boy of high ideals and morals. The following incident is characteristic:

> But can't I open an argument somehow? I argued about religion, the Bible, the Koran, etc., with a woman for two hours Sunday. She sure got "hot under the collar," and as good as called me a heathen. Then she gave in and invited me over to their home for supper.

Emotionally, Ralph is affectionate and friendly. He can put himself in the other fellow's place easily and this renders him sympathetic. It accounts also for his adoption of a service philosophy in life, as well as for his love of good music, and his keen interest in little children.

Harry (3)

Harry is an Easterner who lives in a small city near New York. His parents are not wealthy, but are people of good breeding and culture and they have given him an excellent home training. He is helpful in church work, and an active member of the Y. M. C. A. Without doubt it is correct to describe Harry as a leader in athletics, scholarship, social activities, and in morals. He is president of his class, and takes the lead in many phases of school life.

It would not be surprising to find certain egotistic tendencies cropping out occasionally in a personality of such pronounced ability. One time he wrote: "I have determined that I shall absorb knowledge at every opportunity in order to get ahead."

When asked if he meant that he intended to become "a sponge," he replied:

I must correct myself on certain points. The day I mailed my last letter, I thought to myself, you selfish nut. You'd think you were here for no other good but your own. Now I think that while it is a good policy to absorb all the knowledge possible, it is just as much my duty to get others interested in bettering themselves, and there is where the service part of life comes in, doesn't it?

It is a mistake to think that boys of such high qualities do not have their moments of depression.

I seem to have lost whatever ambition or backbone, or little hopefulness and confidence I ever had. All that wouldn't seem so bad, if I just could see any point to living at all. It seems so useless for me to be here. I don't feel that way so much at home, because I'm necessary to father's and mother's happiness, but when I'm not with them I feel as if I were just somebody else to breathe air and take up room and be fed. I suppose something has to happen to me to take me out of myself soon, or I'll develop melancholia.

Fred (4)

This young Polish-Catholic is loyal both to his religion and his ancestry. Since his father died when he was young, his mother and an older brother have had to support the family and bring up also an older

sister and a younger brother. They are simple, thrifty, industrious people.

Fred is a "star" athlete, and for that reason a leader in other school activities. He is domineering, rugged in physique, aggressive, popular with his friends and mentally alert. He sticks out doggedly for high standards, and is without fear.

The *High School Annual* gave the personal history of Fred as follows:

> Athletic Association 1, 2, 3, 4; Junior Chamber of Commerce 2; Varsity Basketball 2, 3, 4; Class Basketball 2, 3, 4; Order of the Square 3, 4; Baseball 3, 4; Varsity football 3, 4; Debate 3, 4; News Staff 4; Business manager News Staff 4; Senior Class Play 4.

How active a part ambition played in the case of Fred is shown in his next letter:

> I had established a reputation that I was proud of and wanted to make it a top notcher. After ten months' toil, I may freely say, I have accomplished what I set out for, by ending my high school career with honors, not only in activities, but in my studies as well. Gee, it was a pleasure to climb, even though I often met a knock. Many a day did I wish that there were forty-eight hours instead of twenty-four.

No boy did more than Fred to induce others to enlist in this correspondence project. He even went so far as to organize a group and talk them into joining. One of his talks aroused some antagonism and the priest advised him to stop writing. Of this incident he says: "When he told me that I must stop corresponding, tears came to my eyes. I knew,

however, that you would understand, for you have been a real friend to me."

Charles (5)

Charles is the only son of an electrical engineer. Both his parents are active church workers, conservative in their religious views and ambitious for their son. The distinctive thing about him is complete willingness to let others do most of the leading. He has decided mechanical ability and in that respect is superior.

Although he is not an athlete, and is active in church, he is a reckless sort of fellow. He is full of fun. He chooses to describe himself in the third person as follows:

> Picture him being 17 years of age, about five feet and nine inches tall, weighing about 135 pounds. He has brown eyes and dark hair and is a junior in High School. He does not do so well in his studies, because he does not try, but he "gets by." One very bad point among the many, but true. He takes part in church and Christian Endeavor work. Not popular enough to be "big-headed" but enjoys himself.

John (6)

John is a typical Southern chap. He has a pleasing way about him and is courteous and gentle. His father is a leading physician in his community. The entire family are active church workers. His father, who teaches a men's class, is more than an ordinary father. John has had every advantage a boy could have, including access to the best of social circles. He has been an active member of the Y. M. C. A.

since he was twelve years old, and has been employed at the "Y" since he graduated from high school.

John is of the intellectual type. Much of his status as a leader is due to the fact that his father is a prominent citizen. He might be called a "bookworm." He is not large in person nor inclined to athletics, and yet he is an outstanding high school leader in a city of three hundred thousand people. He is an average student, was president of his class as a senior, president of a State Older Boys' Conference and major in the R. O. T. C. He is somewhat lacking in initiative.

Verne (7)

Verne, too, is the son of a physician and lives in a mid-Western metropolitan city. His parents are active church workers. He belongs to the non-athletic type of leader and is something of a "sheik." He has a pleasing way about him and is inclined to be happy-go-lucky. Not a good student, he had some difficulty in graduating. Besides having been president of the Hi-Y Club, he is the president of the older boys' group at the church he attends. In addition he was a football manager, on the student council, and a member of the matinée dance committee at school. In one letter he says, "All that and a girl keep me going."

As a younger high school boy, he was a "holy terror" who gave his elders a good deal of trouble. His Sunday school superintendent reports that a radical change came over him following an Older Boys' Conference. Verne seems to lack the ability

to size up situations correctly, but is faithful in the performance of his obligations and responsibilities.

The lack of definite objectives to hold them down may account for much of the restlessness which characterizes boys like Verne. This confusing vagueness gets expressed as follows:

I have no real objective in life, as yet. Of course, I want to help others and do as much for others as I can. You ask me why I am living. Really I don't know what to say. I'm still quite young, and do not know the real motive of why I'm living. I have not picked my life work, and for that reason I have not found my objective yet.

Walter (13)

Walter is a member of a large, congenial family which lives in a small mid-Western town. His father is a physician, and Walter is looking forward to following that vocation, if he can get into medical school on his average school grades. His home is a religious one and he takes a wholesome interest in church activities himself. His ideals and habits are of the best.

His only contact with the Y. M. C. A. has been through the Older Boys' Conference.

Walter owes his other associations to his athletic prowess. He is large, not especially good looking, and not a good student. He has a host of friends for which he has his football ability to thank.

In my school work I find that it is best to play the game square. God is a great help in my work.

What has made my high school career worthwhile? First I would say the association with the students and

my friends, and second, athletics or the honors I received from them. I did not receive the highest grades, but they were over 80 per cent, except in three cases.

Clarence (15)

This boy's father did not amount to much for he deserted his family, and so his mother teaches music to keep Clarence and his sister in school. Clarence works after school to help earn his way. He is fairly active in an Evangelical church but he is interested also in Christian Science. His contact with the Y. M. C. A. has been confined to the Older Boys' Conference and to personal acquaintanceship with Secretaries.

As an athlete, he is an individualist rather than a team player. Wrestling is his favorite sport. He belongs to the motor type and does not take readily to books. One of his letters informs us, "Right now I am having a dickens of a time trying to pass in everything." A later report revealed that he had failed to graduate from the technical high school which he attended.

This is one of his attempts to peer into the future:

> My object in life is to live clean, to become a civil engineer, and thus to be of some use to mankind. I will try and make some important discoveries, if I can, so as to make living easier, as Thomas Edison has done.

Clarence has two pet ideas. First, that he should help the world; and second, in fulfilling this purpose, the world shall make something of a fuss about him. He is infected with the typically American desire to do something big.

Harold (16)

This young man is from a less well-to-do Southern family. He has been a Y. M. C. A. member since eleven years old. He is an active worker in his church, a fundamentalist in theology, and a leader in the De Molay and Hi-Y. Harold is an extremist in what he does, good or bad.

He gave this diagnosis of himself:

> I am not what you would call a "trifling" boy and I am not an angel. My greatest fault in school was arguing with the teachers when I thought I was right, no matter what the consequences—and no doubt that cost me some good grades. I am also infected with one fault —craziness, or wisecracks, or nuttiness, or whatever you want to call it. In school, or at a party, or anywhere, I put in my wisecracks, whenever I get a chance. And those chances come pretty often in school, so I use them —and I get "used" for doing it too.

While not a "star" athlete, he is active in all sports. On the gym floor he is bumptious, aggressive, and quick tempered. He is a scrapper and hard to please in close decisions during a game. He is ambitious, has plenty of confidence in himself, and generally succeeds in what he undertakes. His self-confidence is such as to be mistaken for egotism. He is the motor type, and does things on the spur of the moment without giving them a great deal of previous thought. His wisecracks are an obvious device to gain recognition and status in the eyes of his associates. As he grows older he gets in with groups that visit roadhouses and he "sows a few wild oats."

Richard (18)

Richard comes from a well-to-do home in a fine residential neighborhood. He has a spending allowance of ten dollars a week, and practically everything within reason that money can buy, as his father is the manager of the largest concern of its kind in this country. Richard is tall, well built, attractive in appearance, and somewhat athletic. His temperament is artistic, he loves music, and is, in a way, popular at school, but he is called an egotist. His domineering ways sometimes antagonize even his best friends. At the private high school which he attends he is active in the Hi-Y Club and in many phases of school life. As a boy he was a regular member of the Y. M. C. A. but he never took an active interest in it until he joined the Hi-Y. He is given to self-pity, is somewhat contrary and quick tempered, and at times lives a dual moral life. When unsuccessful, he becomes angry, melancholy or assumes a "happy-go-lucky" air.

Boys with Minor Rôles

The next set of boys have been grouped together because at present they fill only places of lesser importance in the high school groups to which they belong, or they are victims of backwardness.

Henry (2)

This boy, who lives just over the line of the exclusive residential neighborhood in a city of a half million people, is allowed considerable freedom by his family, which seldom inquires about or takes much

interest in what he is doing. As the father has prospered increasingly in his commercial pursuits, the family has moved from poorer to better-off neighborhoods. Although his parents are not church folks, Henry has joined. For a number of years he was a member of the Y. M. C. A., but dropped out to join the neighborhood Pioneer Club, the Hi-Y Club and De Molay. He has attended two Older Boys' Conferences and has gone to the "Y" Camp.

Henry is small of stature and lacking in special ability as an athlete. This has bothered him so greatly at times as to destroy his confidence in himself and make him timid and sensitive. While he belongs to the literary type of boy, his letters did not show it, nor is he an exceptionally good student.

He says:

> It might be well to start my history by saying that I was born tongue-tied. In other words, I have not an aggressive nature. I consider this a great gift, because I really think that silence at the right time is the mark of a leader. Through the many years my meek nature grew meeker and meeker, and together with my extremely sensitive nature, gave me many troubles.
>
> In my younger years, I knew few enemies, because I refused to quarrel. I could always get out of fights by giving in to the other fellow. Finally, I got in with some fellows that took advantage of my weak spirit and cheated me out of many things. Even in camp I felt inferior to the other boys when I was in the council meeting. This was a representative group from each cabin. Imagine how a mouse feels in a council of lions!

A boy with marked tendencies of this character will try to hit upon an offset which will "compensate" or make up in some way for the handicaps

which he suffers from his shortcomings. It is not surprising to learn that Henry spends little time on foolishness and has little patience with the boy who wants to joke constantly. He always wants to get right down to the subject under discussion and come to a definite conclusion concerning it. His suggested solutions of problems are quite reasonable, and yet he cannot always win hearty support from the group for them.

Ray (8)

Ray is a tall, good-looking boy who wears glasses, and is quite serious in his attitudes. He is an active member of the Methodist church, accepting responsibility readily and performing it dependably. He has two younger sisters and all the family are active church workers. His father is a sales manager. Ray remained out for a year to work and save before going on with his college course, but his health was such that he went only one year.

He is a quiet, non-athletic, clean-cut type of fellow. He does not give the impression of being shy, but he is not an outstanding leader.

My objective is to have a nice home, a family, and a good job, so that I will be able to keep my family as comfortable as possible, and give them the best things in life—to give them better advantages than I have had. I like to think I am living not only for myself, but for those who need help, and those who have helped me, and those whom I love and owe my life and happiness to. In my case, there are many such people.

George (9)

This young man is the youngest member of a

large Russian-Jewish family, although he was born in the United States. The family has had to move a great deal and this drifting about has exerted an important influence upon the development of his personality. He has always lived in large cities. The father is a printer, but the family has had a hard time to make both ends meet. His mother is inclined to be orthodox religiously, but the father is a free thinker.

George did not join the Y. M. C. A. until he was sixteen years old. Following an Older Boys' Conference, he read and studied a great deal about the life of Christ, and almost decided to become a Y. M. C. A. Secretary, which caused considerable conflict of opinion in his family. He has taken his studies seriously, like most boys who have to earn their own way. George is a keen thinker, aggressive, but not especially athletic, although large of stature. In one letter he says:

> I am living because I was born and was nourished and was taught to develop myself, and because I have not died since. I have never attempted suicide because death can be no better than life. Besides I'm enjoying myself. I'll wait till the party breaks up of itself.

Frank (10)

Frank comes from the home of a day laborer and lives in the mill district of a large city. His father died when he was young and the family had no easy time to provide food and shelter. As a high school boy, Frank was tall, ungainly, poorly dressed, and not attractive in his manners. He was unusually backward and so did not mix with other boys to

any great extent. He never rose to prominence at school, or in outside activities. He might be called an example of the "isolated" type which develops feelings of inferiority.

He is mechanical, something of a genius in that respect, and of a scientific turn of mind. In the basement at home, he has an electrical shop of his own in which he spends a lot of time. His contact with the Y. M. C. A. came about through community church work, for he belonged to the parish group of Boy Scouts, and played on one of its teams, although he was not actively interested in the church. In addition he gave his confidence to a "Y" Secretary who in response tried to help him with his personal problems. Frank is not the type of boy who gets good grades in school, for schools make little provision for peculiar talent in one direction, but he has a keen and discerning mind.

My faults are too many and too long to cover in detail, but I will tell you of a few. 1. I can't meet people. 2. I can't talk. 3. My concentration is poor, except on those subjects that I like. 4. I swear. 5. I lose my temper. 6. I have no patience with the weak, myself included. 7. I am afraid of girls.

In fact I am all wrong. I discovered these and other weaknesses one evening when I stopped long enough to think of where my dull life was leading me. I have tried to remedy the swearing, but I can't do that until I gain control over my temper.

Alfred (12)

Alfred was good-looking, refined in features, played the piano well, and was highly emotional. His

father was a lawyer, who was divorced by his mother because he was unfaithful. His mother afterwards married a skilled trade union worker. She was of a very nervous temperament. There was a great deal of family tension, not a little of it between Alfred and his stepfather. They lived in the rooming house area of a large city. During his high school days Alfred was a regular member of the Y. M. C. A. gymnasium classes, and an active attendant of a pre-millennial type of church. He was of special service around the "Y," playing the piano, tending the desk, and at one time acted in the capacity of a "gym" leader, although he did not have unusual athletic ability. During the first three years in high school he got along fairly well, but he finally ran away from home, went West temporarily, joined the navy for a short time, and tried to take a man's place in the world.

The note of pessimism in his statement is perhaps a natural outcome of his hard usage after he quit school and learned to know what it means to tramp the streets looking for a job, and how lonely life can be among strangers.

My ideal has become that of a state of happiness to be arrived at through Buddha's Principle of Self-abnegation. While here on earth I want financial independence. To the proletariat, life is not worth living.

Adolph (14)

Adolph's father is an eye, ear and nose specialist. He has an older brother. His childhood was not especially happy, because of his father's domineering and dictatorial attitude, copied to some extent

also by the older brother, which continued throughout his high school days. Furthermore, he was not gifted, either socially or athletically, and thus somehow failed to win and hold a place in any groups formed at the school or elsewhere. So he lost interest in his school work, in the church, in choosing a possible vocation, and in himself.

Adolph is the type of boy who seems to take things as they come. Most people would call him shy, backward and timid. Of course he was not prominent while in high school. The main appeal of the Y. M. C. A. to him was its athletic program, on account of the friendly contacts which he might make. He lives in a predominantly industrial and foreign community.

To play the game, the whole game and nothing but the game—that is my motto. By this I mean, not the usual line about "to the last man, etc.," but to get into everything worthwhile, to get married as soon as possible, despite such seeming obstacles as high cost of living, to try and engage in the fullness of life, instead of being a bystander. Heretofore in my limited range of experience, I have always tried to avoid becoming too interested in anything, so that there never would be a shock of disappointment.

In a succeeding letter he elaborates on this last statement above, saying :

For example, when I went out for track, I did it in a sort of joking manner, never trained seriously, so that I would not feel disappointed when I didn't make a "letter." I joked about the school and to the fellows, so that I would not become too attached to them. Somehow, I do not seem to have the idea acclaimed by some of mak-

ing the world a better place. That is, I try when I get a chance, but I do not have a throbbing ambition to renovate everything and everybody.

Boys with Variable Rôles

It is not possible to assign four of the boys very definitely to either of the above classifications. In some respects they belong with the leaders, and in others with those who play minor parts. This is, without a doubt, a quite common occurrence among the general mass of high school boys.

Martin (11)

Martin, who comes from a humble home, is the youngest of three boys. His father works in a milk condensery. Martin has had to earn almost all his expenses while in school. Right now he is friendly and spends a lot of time with a banker's daughter.

This lad is fairly tall and slender, athletically inclined, attractive in appearance, a good dancer, and indeed might be classed as the "sheik" of his township high school located in a village of nine hundred population. He is not a brilliant student but he "gets along." Like many boys of his age, he is a little inclined to have too good an opinion of himself, but this is not a serious fault with him. He has been very active in the Hi-Y Club, which has brought about a great change in his habits and ideals. He has never been the church type of boy.

Leonard (17)

Leonard comes from a very fine family of college people. His father is a hardware merchant in a small

city in New York State, where the people take great pride in their fine churches and schools.

He is the youngest boy in the group of correspondents. His biographical notes reflect the frolicsome nature of "a mere boy." He is a good student, not athletic, although physically well built. He loves music, enjoys the out-of-door life, and is somewhat overemotional and temperamental. Leonard is still a sophomore in high school.

> Somehow my queer character likes emotions and dramatics. I like emotional people, and sometimes, when feeling rather fresh, I have a play of my own so I can be very emotional. I like emotional movies, also.

Leonard's home guarantees him a good social status and may carry him through the period of stress while he is bringing his emotional and artistic tendencies under better control. It is too early in his high school career to predict how he will turn out. If school or church bring his dramatic abilities to the front, that will win him recognition from his own age group. On the other hand, his frolicsome nature may lead him to waste all his time in social activities, with the result that he will be a failure elsewhere.

Donald (19)

Here is a sample of the farm boy, who gets a chance to go to the township high school. He is the solitary type, quiet, whom everybody assumes does not care much for society or athletics. He was an excellent student who seldom got grades below ninety per cent.

For all his quiet ways, he has many friends and is well liked. He was elected president of the Hi-Y Club and made good in that office. Donald is a boy of deep religious convictions. He and his older brother have had to do the brunt of the work on the farm, for his father has been blind for many years. The family are ardent church workers and the spirit of the home is very fine.

A boy's own account of the first time he becomes conscious that a person is supposed to have an aim in life is always interesting.

> Life to me is the most wonderful thing in the universe. Not until I attended the Older Boys' Conference did I know that everyone had a certain aim in life. This I heard during one of the talks.
>
> I used to, as I suppose all fellows do for awhile, wish that I lived in a city with lots of money, and did not have anything to do. Lately, however, I have found out that the happiest persons are those who have just enough to live on comfortably, and try to be of service to others.

Again it is difficult to foresee what Donald will make of himself. Timidness may always prevent him from gaining the recognition which his abilities deserve. On the other hand, he may go far if he is tried out in places of leadership, as he was by the high school teacher who made it possible for him to be elected president of the Hi-Y Club in their rural school.

James (20)

James, who was born and reared in the West, is small of stature, industrious, not especially athletic, and below the average as a student. He is the

youngest in a family of five children. When James was a baby the father deserted the family, so the economic struggle has been severe. During his sophomore year he failed in nearly all of his school subjects. James was the type of fellow who insisted on having his own way, so much so that his teachers called him "bull headed." He insisted that he was not going back to the "darn" school, and the family let him have his way. Later he changed his view.

Although he was active in the Boy Scouts, and influential in keeping the gang together, he was never chosen patrol leader. He was regular in Sunday school and attended a Y. M. C. A. Camp as a charity case. The girls and fellows like him because he says "crazy" things and cuts up a good deal.

Here are estimates of the personality of James made by observers:

It is interesting to watch James "do his stuff" in this gang of six or seven fellows who were the main leaders of the old troop. While he was short in stature, he was never self-conscious of it in his group. He won recognition by amusing the rest of the group and was up on all the popular "slap stick" methods of raising a laugh. Although not particularly witty, he enjoyed acting the part of the fool, so as to get into the limelight. It is interesting to note that he no longer bossed them, as he had done before, but would hike with them—which they did very much—and also play golf, tennis, and basketball with them.

In his Sunday school class he was considered the leader. His Sunday school teacher admired him because he gave no trouble himself and was influential in keeping order. On the playground he was "king." His playmates did what he wanted them to do or else he chased them

away. In his play around his home this was particularly noticeable, and many times he was told that he could never make friends by bossing his mates around and chasing the independent ones away from his yard. Yet, he was seldom alone, and as he grew older, especially, his playmates were principally the younger boys of the neighborhood whom he could more easily boss around.

In each of the above cases the economic or social status of the home renders the status of the boy uncertain. With one exception the boys themselves do not seem to have the types of ability required to guarantee economic success. Leonard's home gives him an excellent start, but it is a question whether he will ever be able to play a superior rôle in his boy groups.

Factors Affecting Personality

If the boys are rated on a sliding scale in relation to any aspect of life, such as economic status, religious interests, or their Y. M. C. A. contacts, it is obvious that the comparative results would show a considerable spread. This may mean that the appeal of the letters, as a method, was not confined to a single type of boy, but met a good response from boys of divergent experiences and backgrounds.

Population Density

It makes considerable difference whether a boy grows up on the farm or in a big city like Chicago. The cultural suggestions which his environment crowds in upon his attention differ greatly in the one case from the other. The channels of expression presented will vary in kind and degree. The size

and standing of the high school, the vogue of the church, and the opportunities for recreation will not be alike. Consequently the formative influences over the growth of personality must be somewhat unique in each instance. The size of the home towns of these boys may be charted as follows:

Over one million	*Up to 500,000*	*Under 100,000*	*Small town*	*Farm*
Alfred	Henry	Ralph	Leonard	
Frank	John		Harry	Martin
George	Ray		Charles	Donald
Clarence	James		Adolph	
Richard	Verne		Walter	
	Harold		Fred	

Economic Status

Almost half of these boys come from working class homes, as compared with only two, or possibly three from well-to-do homes. They grade in this respect as follows:

Laborers' homes	*Middle-class homes*	*Professional men's homes*	*Well-to-do homes*
Martin		Verne	
Frank	Harold	Ray	Harry
Alfred	Clarence	Adolph	Richard
George	Charles	Henry	John
James	Ralph	Walter	
Fred	Leonard		
Donald			

Y. M. C. A. Contacts

The formative influence exercised by the Y. M. C. A. on the character of a high school boy will depend upon the length of the period and the variety of the contact. In some cases attendance

at one Older Boys' Conference may exert a greater influence than month to month membership. The chart is as follows:

Continuous active membership	*Active in "Y" work group*		*Contact intermittant*	*Slight contact*
Henry				
	Richard	Donald	James	Clarence
John	George	Frank	Leonard	Walter
Harold	Alfred	Martin	Adolph	Charles
Ralph	Ray		Fred	
Harry	Verne			

Vocational Aptitudes

It is not difficult to pick out the boy with mechanical ability in high school. As is said, "He thinks through his muscles." It is a little surprising perhaps to find that so many of this type could be interested in letter writing. The fact that certain boys are classified according to a commercial or literary interest, means only that during their later high school days, this was the predominant vocational trend. In most cases, there is a combination of these interests and aptitudes.

Mechanical	*Humanic*	*Literary*	*Artistic*	*Professional*	*Commercial*
Donald	Ralph	Henry	Leonard	John	Adolph
Charles	Fred			Walter	Harold
Ray	James		Alfred	Harry	
Frank	George		Richard	Verne	
Clarence	Martin				

The Wishes

W. I. Thomas has proposed a fourfold classification of the wishes, namely, recognition, response, new

experience, and security. Ellsworth Faris includes in his critical analysis and tentative classification "group loyalty" and it is introduced here because it is so dominant in the personality of Ralph and Henry.

Recognition Status Distinction	*Security Worry Fears*	*New Experience Thrills Curiosity*	*Response Intimacy*	*Group Loyalty to a cause*
Walter	Donald	Charles	James	Ralph
Martin	Adolph	Verne	George	Henry
Fred	Harold	Leonard		
Harry	Ray			
John	Alfred			
Clarence	Frank			
Richard				

In a general way the membership of the Hi-Y Club represents the leaders of a school, and, as a result, boys of superior personality possibilities. Among the factors which seem to account for the superior status acquired by the above group of young men are athletic prowess, exceptional mental ability, home advantages, family standing in the community, high ideals and organizing ability in social groups. Harry is the only one in the above group who has all of these qualifications for leadership. In the cases of Walter and Clarence, their athletic ability seems to be sufficient to secure group standing for them, regardless of their shortcomings otherwise. Charles, John and Verne are not athletically inclined, but they gain their status by family position, organizing ability, or because they are socially good fellows.

Seven causes according to these documents explain why certain of the boys filled only minor parts in

school and group life, namely, frail or small physique, sheer lack of athletic ability, emotional instability, economic insecurity of the family, low intelligence or lack of mental application, nationality or racial handicaps, and conflict situations in home, school or elsewhere. With the exception of Henry and Adolph all of the boys in this group have an inadequate economic background. Frank, George, Ray, Alfred, and Adolph are inclined to be the isolated type of boy. Adolph wears glasses and this one factor is a handicap in athletic activity. Athletic ability or the lack of it, plays an important part in determining the rôle which a boy is to play in the eyes of the high school group.

With these wide divergences of basic factors like cultural background, intelligence, wishes and interests, it is obvious that no convincing set of generalizations regarding the influence on these personalities in the making, by the Y. M. C. A. or any other social institution, can be drawn up. Contributions made by any of these agencies depend upon the peculiarities of each of the boys with which it deals. Moreover since many agencies compete for his time the influence of any one depends upon the amount of interest which he takes in it. This will become more and more obvious in the succeeding chapters.

PART II

HIS HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

CHAPTER II

THE BOY AND HIS HOME

RECENT studies in childhood are constantly magnifying the importance of early home life in the formation of social attitudes, intellectual views, emotional nature and the reactions of personality exhibited later on by the boy at school and on the playground. Some psychologists are saying that the major fixations of personality, patterns of behavior, or traits of character—whichever phrase is preferred—are determined during the pre-school years. Certainly a process of incubation goes on during these years, which is largely responsible for the principal interests and attitudes of every boy in the grades.

From other sources there is much talk that the home is losing its grip during adolescence. Community agencies, such as the church, school, playground, Boys' Club, and Y. M. C. A., it is true, have taken over many of the former functions of the home in recent years. In addition, big changes in the industrial system and in city life have altered greatly the economic and social circumstances of the home. Furthermore, it is intimated that youth is in revolt, and no longer disposed to conform to adult practices, standards and authority—especially so with respect to home demands.

Why certain homes are able to carry out so much of their program with the boy up to and through the high school age, and others are not, is a problem on which this study should have something worth while to contribute. The fact that there is little or no conflict between the boy and his family may not be a good criterion that his home training is a success. It may mean no more than that the family has drilled a weak child into such a state of submissiveness that he is lacking in independent judgment and creative ability to think and act for himself, when his mother and father are not around to prompt him.

For a solution of this problem it is necessary to get at the inner mechanisms of family life from the boys' point of view. Yet some of the very best correspondents were hesitant about revealing the situation at home. Their statements about family life were too general.

The Inner Mechanisms of Family Life

The family has been described by Professor Ernest W. Burgess of the University of Chicago as "a group of interacting personalities, in that they represent a living, growing thing." That is, the family is not an assemblage of isolated individuals, but an organized, functioning unity. These individuals are members one of another. Although not equal in importance, each member receives from and adds to the common family life contributions none else can receive or make. It is this common fund of experience that makes it a very unified thing.

Within any family group each person has a place

of his own to fill and the other members of the group govern themselves accordingly. Father is the income earner, mother cares for the house, only certain members may use the auto, and so on. Likewise, the family as a unit has a place to fill and a status to maintain in the neighborhood or community. In the person of the father it contributes the services of a professional man, of the mother an active worker in women's clubs, and of an older brother a "star" on the high school football team.

The following document recites the story of how a high school boy introduced so many innovations in the family during his Americanization process as to alter it completely. His situation at home in the beginning may be epitomized in the expression which Ralph uses to describe his early school experience, "I got my English and Danish mixed." This mixing of "Old World and New" was true, not only of language, but of all other phases of family life as well.

In a humble little frame house next to the school, there happened the most important event in my life—November 11, 1908. That was the day I was born. My father came from Sweden, almost five years previous, to pave the way for his family. After a time, he earned enough to pay the passage of his Danish wife and their son to this country.

Until I was six years old, I spoke nothing but Danish. My brother went to a Danish Lutheran school, but Mother and Dad wanted me to go to the public school. I went only one day. They spoke English, and sat in little red chairs, so I refused to go. Later, when I started to school, I got my English and Danish mixed.

Father and Mother often told of how many hardships they had suffered in the "old" country and when they came to this country first. Then again they talked of how thankful they were to be in America. When I was younger, I lived in Denmark in my thoughts. Mother read stories to us and sang songs. They were of the "old" country. My older brother was born in Denmark but I can understand and speak the language better than he. Of course he is proud of what has gone before, still he wants to be known as an American and spells his name with a "son." It's just a difference in our natures.

The Danish influence appears to be very marked. The songs of the "old country" left a strong emotional imprint upon his nature. The stories of the old life there affected him so deeply that he can say, "I lived in Denmark in my thoughts."

The economic status of the family grew out of the trade which the father learned before coming to America.

Dad has always been unusually skillful in his trade, so it took very little time for him to get ahead. He won many prizes in the old country for his cabinet making. He has commanded unusually high wages in his chosen country always. After I had just passed my first year in the world, my father bought a beautiful large brick house. He helped to build the house and designed the interior to his own taste. It still is the most beautiful home on "the Heights." We lost this house in a trade not long after.

About the time we moved, I had just passed my fifth year. It made very little difference to me that we moved, but it puzzled me some. My outlook on life grew more serious. Many times I would go out by myself and wonder why Dad had to save so much harder

or why we had to deny ourselves so much. I was nearly ten years old when we were forced to move again. The rent was raised so much that we couldn't afford to stay.

The influence of their loss of family status on Ralph's personality proved to be very great. The element of fear over the possibilities of getting into worse financial straits began to cast a cloud over him. As a consequence, he says, "My outlook on life grew more serious."

The action and reaction of the various members of the family on each other during the process of its Americanization is very important, more especially, because it gave rise to certain conflict situations within the family group. The older brother took to American ways more readily than his parents, which seems to have put him out of harmony with his family in many ways. Ralph, who was younger, did not become so detached, but moved along either in step with or only just a little ahead of his parents.

When I went to school much of my clothing was patterned after the old country styles, but it embarrassed me none at all. When I reached seventh grade I voiced my ambition to go to high school. Dad's notion of a fellow going to work after the eighth grade was made known, but I know he wanted to see me in high school.

My parents have changed with time. When woman suffrage was voted on, Dad said women did not know enough to vote, but we argued him into voting for it. Mother votes her own way and was one of the first of the married women to get her hair bobbed.

Mother went to church quite often, but Father went very little. He was too busy building up what he had

lost. He is not the man to nurse a grouch against the world. He knew that sooner or later he'd get started again. As little as I was, I was very much pained not to have Dad at church. I thought that it was absolutely necessary that he go to church in order to gain admittance to heaven. I would rather have lived in a hut than leave Dad out of heaven. He worked Sunday after Sunday making our house more beautiful.

Dad likes to go fishing, and it seems that the rest of us take after him, even sister. We have caught as many as three hundred perch in the lake at a time. We sold all that we couldn't eat and made good money on them. I like to fish with a reel and rod, but I have had little opportunity for it.

When I said a nickel a week for spending money, I didn't mean it scientifically. I meant it literally. I don't spend one cent of my pay a week. All I spend, I earn on the side. I suppose I average only about 25 cents a week for spending money. Hardly ever do I go to a movie—maybe once every two months. I'd rather play basketball.

Dad was always opposed to my getting the "latest" in clothes, although Mother has favored it. Dad says, "Get your head shaved, not cut just a little." Mother says, "Get a nice haircut."

My older brother belongs to the Masonic fraternity. We are all fairly radical politically, and more or less opposed to prohibition. When my brother joined the Masons, Dad had his say, and he said a lot against it. He is not at all in favor of secret orders. Neither am I.

Though neither Mother nor Dad speak perfect English, we never speak Danish at the table any more. Once in awhile she writes Danish letters, but it actually seems strange to speak Danish.

His family has much to do with the determination of Ralph's attitudes. It is easy to see that he

adopts as his own their radical political ideas, their attitude of opposition to prohibition and secret orders, their very thrifty habits and fondness for fishing. This unconscious acceptance of the family attitudes and practices by the younger members of the home, constitutes a sort of psychic-osmosis. The subtle manner in which the character and personality of the child is conditioned and determined by this process has led some psychologists into overlooking its full importance.

During this same period Ralph was also a member of various American groups outside his home which forced him to adjust himself to both sets of situations. When personality is thought of as a product of the status achieved in certain groups, then the dilemmas involved in trying to maintain his position in the family and among his boy friends become apparent. One result was a lack of palship with his father, a certain amount of secrecy on his part, and a feeling of social distance between them. This does not mean that any open break with the family group of a serious nature occurred. The situation is well described by Ralph himself in these two sentences:

> Father and Mother did not believe in telling their children about sex, so we had to find out for ourselves. There has never been any "palship" between us that is seen in so many native American homes.

The turn of events which finally drew the family together again is one of the most dramatic incidents in his story.

> Up to a short time ago our family was not as united, happy and intimate as other families I have seen. When

I went with a girl, I told no one. When my brother got married, we did not know until two days before. We never really confided in our parents nor in each other.

When I left for St. Louis at the end of my sophomore year, I yelled Good-by to Mother and Dad. I noticed a strange look in Mother's eyes that bothered me. Finally, I realized that I hadn't really said Good-by, for I hadn't shaken her hand as was customary in the old country. I decided that the next time I would remember to do this.

I'm going to give myself credit for starting the change. The next time I left home I did kiss her. Yes, it was hard, for I wasn't used to it, and people were looking on, but I was repaid by the surprised look and the tears that came to her eyes. Then I knew that I had denied her the love a mother craves. I resolved to be more careful.

I remember the time I wrote Mother for the first time about a date I had. It made her and me understand each other more. And I suppose the rest of the family seeing me kiss her made them less backward.

It might be said that the suggestion which brought about these significant changes in the customs of his home came primarily from American practice in this respect. He had, of course, seen American boys many times kiss their parents good-by and it had worked out into a recognition of what things like a hand shake from him would mean to his father. Then, too, his resolution to initiate this custom may have gathered strength from what was said in the Hi-Y Club when something brought the topic up for discussion. At any rate, very far-reaching effects upon the family life and the personality of each member in the group resulted from what may seem a very insignificant item in his American experience.

I was happy at my closer relationship to my mother but I wanted to know my brothers better, especially my younger brother. Though we lived together, went together, and slept together all our lives, we didn't know each other. He never knew of my dates. When away from home one time, I got him to come and stay with me. He had decided to quit school. I persuaded him to go back to school. It was then that we got to know each other and we became real pals.

When he went back home, we got to writing letters. I got one just the other day. He had made the high school football team and he sent me some write-ups from the paper. He was happy and proud and thanked me for getting him to go back. He said he missed me, and I sure missed him. But imagine us admitting that we missed each other!

Dad and Mother were proud of him. The whole family had gone to see him play. Dad wanted to know why he didn't run in the opposite direction once in awhile, because there weren't so many players in the way. I hope we can be in college together. We are real pals now.

I remember very well the time I told the whole family about my girl. For the first time my older brother and Dad entered into my personal life—and how well they did it. They kidded me very little, let me use their cars, and offered to loan me money. They made it easy.

Then Dad was trying, and has been trying, to have the sewerage situation remedied. My older brother and I helped by getting petitions signed. The Mayor opposed the expenditure of money, but the condition was awful. The Mayor wrote an article in the paper declaring the issue merely to be a political one. I answered back in an article. Imagine the surprise of my Dad and Mother when they read in big headlines: "Sewerage Condition Grave Menace" and three columns followed.

This brought Dad and me closer. He asked me to drive him and some other men to see the State Health Commissioner. I was glad to do it.

Due to this series of innovations, the family begin to "enter in and live in each other's lives" more and more. It is the attainment of this footing which seems to be of paramount importance in the most fruitful relations between the members of a home group. It is not a simple matter of physical proximity, nor even of participation in common activities, but rather an emotional and imaginative sharing in each other's experiences. As Ralph puts it, referring to his brother, "We lived together, went together and slept together all our lives, but we didn't know each other."

Ralph says in conclusion:

Now our family is so different I hardly know it. Everything seems brighter and happier. Why, I hardly know them now—we show our confidences more. When I wanted to give the girl's mother a present for her birthday, I wrote my older brother and asked him to buy a "sentimental" vocal record, for I knew she liked that kind. Before this, I'd never have thought of asking him to do anything like that.

I've never before had as intimate letters from Mother and Dad as I get now. I actually believe that we think a lot more of each other now and that they think a lot of me. They may not see all the change that has taken place in the family as I do, but God, it has changed! It's so much better now.

What do you think! We got a piano at home and my kid sister is learning to play it, so I decided I'd take lessons too.

Attitudes of Boys toward the Family Group

There is much less autocracy in the modern American home and much more individual freedom than there used to be. While at first this may seem to involve too much risk for the welfare of the child, it has distinct advantages from the point of view of the individual development of personality. Especially is the high school boy freer than ever before in deciding for himself the issues which arise in his affairs, and in determining what his own course of action shall be. It is the attitudes within the family circle which determine the amount of freedom allowed or of coercion exercised by the will of the group. The range of these attitudes is wide, extending all the way from love and affection to hatred and open quarrels. The changing incidents which happen in the course of the day give rise to constant shifts in these attitudes, although in the case of situations which are apt to occur over and over again, there develops a like repetition in the attitudes of response. These attitudes may be grouped roughly into three main divisions for discussion.

A. Those that make for homogeneity
B. Those that indicate some cleavage of unity
C. Those that tend toward conflict and disintegration

Under each of these divisions certain variations of attitude are cited and given a number herewith which is inserted for reference in the materials that follow, as a key to the form of analysis which will be employed. The following traits and index num-

bers belong to the first group: (1) Love and devotion, (2) Intimacy and chumminess, (3) Admiration and pride, (4) Friendliness and coöperation, (5) Respect and awe. In the second group are: (6) Sense of obligation and gratitude, (7) Toleration and secretiveness, (8) Indifference, (9) Coldness or reticence, and (10) Dissatisfaction. In the third group: (11) Critical and quarrelsome, (12) Resentment, (13) Defiance and contempt, (14) Unbearable, and (15) Disrespect and hatred.

Extracts taken from the materials supplied by several of the boys will now be quoted and appraised, using the above fifteen points for that purpose.

John

My home life is the best that could be asked for. I have two good Christian parents and two younger sisters. My parents are active in church work and require that we attend church and Sunday school, and that we lead a Christian life. We live in a good community and attend good schools. My home life is agreeable (4), and I would, as a rule, rather be home at night than other places, but I go out about as I want to.

As I have already told you, my father is a doctor. I have one older brother twenty years old. We are Baptists. Our family is very religious. My father teaches a big Sunday school class of 500 men (3). Even though I do not get everything that I have desired or wished, I have had a very pleasant home (2).

This summer Dad and I played golf for two weeks (2), but for the first two weeks I played tennis every day. Then I switched to golf and played every day, except Sunday, of course. Recently I talked with Dad about taking a business course and he was for it right

off (2). He said that it would help me in college. Have you ever read *Sorrell and Son* by Warwick Deeping? I am reading it now. It is certainly a great book. It reminds me of my father and myself (1).

Martin

My home is an average one—two brothers and two sisters. My sisters are married. My parents saw to it that all of us boys went to Sunday school together. At the age of ten my mother was taken sick. Blood poison set in. I can remember the doctor coming every day and the house was always like death. One day I went to her and begged her not to die (1). Something seemed to tell me that I would need her a great deal. God must have been listening, for she is with us to-day. All I knew was that she was talking crazy all the time, that my father was up all night with her for about six months, that I was washing dishes, and running errands here and there till I was so fatigued that I crawled into bed dead tired (1). All the while she was on the verge of life and death, I used to go around with a face "a mile long" at school. I never played much. I always considered that play or any form of amusement was contrary to the situation I was in (1).

When young I thought my parents were very inefficient but now I see where I can never repay them. I must live right for their sake (1).

My father either worked on a farm or was employed at a milk factory. He was of a restless nature and when the job grew tiresome, he would quit. Mother, having married more to secure a living than for love, put up with Father's shortcomings, as only a determined martyr can (12). There was not that companionship between Mother and Dad that there should have been. No doubt this accounts for my great attachment toward my mother (1).

Fred

I have one sister who is twenty years old. Many times during my younger age a quarrel would arise, but being older, she could handle me quite well. As I grew older the idea of quarreling left us. I always respected my sister in every way (5), and saw to it that my boy friends respected her too. I have a younger brother and an older one, the latter being 23 years old. I believe I can say that he is the head of the household, for my father died when I was thirteen years old. Mother worked hard every day and he could not stand it to see her work so hard. So he left his education behind and went to work (6). Now he is a skilled worker in his trade, and besides, he is a member of the Building and Loan Association. More than this he has helped my brother and myself to avoid bad conditions and temptations we might fall into (4). When Boys' Work was started in our city, he was in favor of my joining.

The aspect of my play life that I consider of the most value was my parents' attitude toward my associates and playmates. They were always glad when I brought my friends to the home lot to play (4). We never made too much noise or seemed to disturb in the least.

Mother never encouraged me to go to parties, and as far as asking girls over for parties, she never did, because she did not want to interfere with our friendships. She thought that if she asked a girl, it might seem as though she were trying to pick one for me. I never felt quite right to ask for money so I could go on a date, when I saw it was so hard earned (6). Consequently I worked on Saturday and after school. The few dates I had were usually school parties, or dances.

Walter

I am next to the youngest of five sons. The oldest and youngest of the children are sisters. My older sister is

about twenty-five. She is one of the best cooks that I know, and when we boys come home, she always wants to cook just what we like (1).

Donald

The home I live in is on an eighty acre farm. This farm is an old homestead. Because of my father's blindness, my life has been changed very much, and many a time I have thought of what it might be, if only father could see. I have had to work very hard at home, because of my father's condition. I help my brothers take care of the farm (4). My older brother graduated from rural school, but as he was needed at home, he could not go to high school, as I am doing.

Charles

I've never thought of being a dad, but when I am one, I'll bring my boy up as I am being reared. Dad's my pal (2). I tell him everything. Mother may listen in on my problems, too. We solve this amusement problem together.

Listen, do you know that I'm the only boy of my crowd and age that attends mid-week services at our church? It's not that I'm so good that I go and it is not my fault either. Dad set me right on that subject. Very plainly he said, "Now see here, son, you must go to prayer meeting" (5). I don't know as I liked it, but now if I don't go, I miss it.

Parents have a hard time. Most boys never realize that fact. Naturally parents make a mis-cue every now and then, but that's because they are trying so hard to do the right thing. The liberties which my parents do give me are the right way to handle these problems. To tell the truth, I never once thought of it as being wrong for my parents to punish me for staying out late (6). I know full well their judgment is best.

These first witnesses belong to the more homogeneous family groups. John comes from a splendid professional home. His parents are cultured people, who have social and economic prestige in the community. His use of the word "require" in speaking of attendance at church should not be taken to mean that John was opposed to going. All of the family went, and as a result he is expected to go too. Other materials of his indicate a vital interest on his part in the church. In the case of Martin, the index numbers fluctuate from (1) to (12). They evidence a swing from deep devotion to his mother to a feeling at other times of resentment toward a member of the family. The dominant attitudes of Fred's home life are reflected in the index numbers 4, 5, and 6. His father's death forced the family to stand together and become mutually helpful. Donald's home life is greatly influenced in the same direction as Fred's by the fact that his father is blind, which forces the family to pull together and share in the common tasks of the farm. The high degree of social control in a family group of this type is well brought out in what Charles has written. Whether this control will continue after he leaves the family group is problematical, depending on group contacts.

In the next documents a certain lack of cohesiveness and unity is indicated in the family group, which at the time had not broken into an open conflict. There is a decided tendency manifest for each one of the family to do as he or she pleases, and in some instances more or less complete indifference toward the family welfare.

Verne

I've lived in a church and Christian home all my life. If I don't go to church on Sunday, I'm absolutely lost. When we were small, our family used to say grace at the table before each meal (4). When my father became Assistant Head at a hospital just outside of the city, we were forced to forego saying grace for the time we lived there, while looking for a house, as we ate with the other people. When we came to our present house, we never started again. I'm sorry we haven't done it (10). When I go to Earl's house they always say grace, and there's a different atmosphere.

Another thing we lost was reading the Bible in the family group. At night, seven or eight years ago, we would sit on the bed and each read a verse or two (4). I wish we would have family Bible reading like you read about in the days of old. It would be very hard to start, however, for we all live on a different time schedule. I believe this hurry, hurry, hurry generation has a lot to do with the weakness of the modern home (8). It isn't what it used to be.

I remember when we used to help Mother with the housework on Saturday. Now on Saturday there is either a meeting, a football game, or else a show. Mother doesn't want to say "No," so away we go without thinking. As we get older, we don't have any set time to get in, as long as it isn't too late. Or if we do stay late once in awhile, nobody says anything (8).

Harry

We are a family of moderate means, no maid, and not any more formal than the average family. Though I am far from proud of it, I must admit that I do not spend much time with my family group, other than to eat, sleep and do my lessons at night (8). I am allowed

a good deal of freedom, because I have never done anything radically wrong. My mother leaves most decisions to me. When something is wrong, like a poor mark in my studies, she often asks me if I have been studying enough or what is the matter.

Until the time when I noticed that I was getting rather far away from the family, I didn't spend hardly any time at home. It came about in this way. When I started high school, I became very much interested in the Y. M. C. A. During my entire sophomore year I had some place to go almost every night. It ran like this: Monday, basketball practice; Tuesday, Y. M.; Wednesday, movies, although sometimes I stayed home; Thursday, swimming practice; Friday, with the bunch to a show; Saturday, dancing lesson. Then in the afternoons I stayed at school for athletics. Just now I am realizing that I have never spent enough time at home (8).

Speaking of family attitudes, I have noticed one thing in particular, as I have grown older, namely, that my opinion was given more consideration. Frequently, my father and I argue (10). Mother dislikes it exceedingly. At first I was told bluntly not to argue, but as I have grown older, Mother has appealed to my feelings, such as, "Remember there are others at the table," and things akin to that.

My mother has been my most puzzling problem. Every time I saw her when she was at the hospital, I was glad that it hadn't been longer. I kiss her every time I leave or come home, but I have to make myself remember that I should get flowers for Mother's Day, her birthday, or the like. When I am in camp, I don't anticipate letters from my mother the way other fellows do, even though I enjoy reading them and replying. Recently, my mother was in the hospital, and honestly, if my sister hadn't offered to take me, I don't think I'd have gone very often. I did notice the empty house when I came

home daily, but it wasn't the kind of emotion I am made to believe it should be. My mother often hears of things I've done, like being elected class officer or helping in an entertainment, and then she asks me why I hadn't told her.

Then I began going to the "Y," and as my mother never caressed me anyhow, I seemed to think of her as a chaperon, one to seek advice and respect from, but not necessarily confide all my personal affairs to (9). I don't go into detail to say that I met a very nice girl to-night at the dance, or I am going to take Helen to the next party.

It is a custom in our house to kiss Mother on entering and leaving, and very often when I have been in a hurry, Mother has asked why I had forgotten to kiss her before leaving (9). I know that my mother wants me to be as attentive as possible, because often when I go to kiss her, she says, "Is that the way you kiss the girls!" But I must say that I have to force myself to do it.

Both of these documents reflect the presence of what is spoken of as modern tendencies in family life. Each member of the group is free to come and go pretty much as he pleases. The chief feature of the home is the dominance of this freedom. It results in an attitude of carelessness or indifference or loss of emotional attachment to the group, which is classified above as "coldness or reticence." Each member of the family is busy with his or her own affairs almost exclusively. This does not mean either that any serious breaks or open conflicts occur. Both these boys, to be sure, get into arguments with their parents, but in a later letter, Harry says, "You classified my arguments with father as too serious. I didn't mean that we had heated discussions. They

are family differences over spending money, staying in, and things like that." Both documents contain indications of considerable affection, on the part of the writers, toward their parents. It is important to note that both of these high school boys are somewhat disturbed over how this modern trend in the home is working out. How is it going to end? In a general way, it might be said that the first group of homes indicate a simpler emotional and sentimental attachment within the family group, while in the second the attitudes are growing more intellectual and are consciously determined.

Finally, the documents submitted contained materials indicating elements of conflict and disintegration which were at work in the home in varying degrees:

Richard

In my early life, I was taught that children were to be seen and not heard. Dad had nobody to boss around, when my brother and sister went away to college, so I was the "flunky." About this time I began to have ideas of my own and I tried to argue (11). Dad would get mad and slap me, but I would argue more. There are times when some of my friends are going to a show, and Father makes me stay at home, just to show that he's boss. He says so himself. I get so mad I could attack him physically (15). He is not in very good health, and when he feels poorly, he takes it out on me. I'm going to get away from home as soon as possible (14). I will hate to leave Mother (5), but I don't care about Dad.

The last scrap I had with my brother was six or seven months ago (11). We were in the kitchen. He put his arm around me and asked a favor. I refused and told him to remove his arm. He didn't so I got a head

lock on him. He tried to strike me, but I had him, and when I squeezed, he went unconscious. As he went out, he clawed my face. The family came in. I put some water on his face and he "came to." My brother threatened to leave and I laughingly told him "to go to hell," for all I cared (13). I was exultant that I had beaten a man that was five years older and outweighed me thirty pounds. All I did was laugh and sing. Mother cried. He doesn't fool with me any more.

As for my feeling toward the family, I would not feel the loss of my father, brother or sister. But life would be awfully hard without my wonderful mother (1).

Adolph

Our family consists of father, mother, brother and myself. I was glad of several things. I thought my mother was good-looking and tried to keep herself youthful in thought too (3), as differentiated from the "movie mamas." I was glad too that I had a father who was known in the city.

On the other hand, I wished a lot of things were different: say, that Dad wouldn't be so domineering—I could go on for pages. I was not punished much at home, but every once in a while, Dad would let out a pronouncement of what I would get if I acted up. In time I learned that it didn't mean anything. I did feel, however, that I was repressed quite a bit, because Dad was dictatorial, and he had a dash of anger (12).

Then, there was my older brother, whom I was supposed to "kow tow" to. Probably, because he was older and wiser, he learned the ways in which "the old man" could be handled. He succeeded in getting most of what he wanted. I was not supposed to entertain any ideas which differed from Dad's. Yet, I wanted to do things myself. When I purchased a bond, the only thing I did was to draw the money out with my bank book and give it

to my father. He bought the bond, and placed it in his box, where I couldn't even see it once in a while (11). What did I do when things like this occurred? I rebelled (13), although for the most part internally, for I had to give in externally.

I can remember when I was told to fix some locks, put on the screens, etc. I would bungle up the job, because I had no tools to work with. I did not like to do anything mechanical, but my father made me do it (11), even though my brother had mechanical ability. Then when I asked my father for advice, he would show his temper (11). Last summer I was promised a hundred dollars if I would help do some repair work around the place, but thus far it hasn't materialized. Along toward the end I was given ten dollars with which to take a trip.

Once when I asked my father, who is a physician, to tell me about things sexual, he said he would when I was eighteen. As I was thirteen, the outlook was not satisfying. I started to gather information from the boys, and from all the books I could find, so by the time I was fifteen, I had the field covered fairly well.

By my father, it was planned that I should enter the field of medicine. I went to the same church, where the rest of the family attended, because I had to (12). Usually, if I appeared at home with a boy friend who was opposed by the higher authorities, he was dropped at once. However, I retained several friends in my later high school years, who were not held in high regard by father.

Alfred

The first sense of inferiority I had is still vivid in my memory. It was the time my mother ran a big rooming house. I was disappointed that my mother did not love me as Clifton's mother loved him (11). The only thing my mother had time to do was to torture me. My life of

restraint at home made me go to extremes at school. Everything I did at home, I got slapped for, or put in a dark closet, or made to go without my supper. Where Mother left off, my step-father began. He never paid any attention to me, even after I got older (14).

Maladjustment within the family group is not, as a rule, due to any one cause, but rather to a combination of factors. Sometimes as can be discerned in these documents, the disturbance arises from the domineering acts of the father; at other times, it is due to a neurotic mother, or to a stepfather, or to economic stress, or to what the boy may consider as unwarranted interference with his ideas and plans. Where folks live constantly in one another's company, as do those in the family group, it is not to be wondered at that differences of opinion should arise; but when the tension becomes as continuous and serious as these documents indicate, the reaction on the personality of the boy is little short of tragic. Parents should show some respect for his personality instead of domineering and coercing a boy because he is still immature. Certainly an older teen-age boy should not be treated as a little child any longer. When the personality of a boy is thwarted and crushed by the attitudes displayed by his parents, it is not surprising that his home means less to him, and that he seeks, as Richard does, to acquire status in other groups. In Adolph's case the results are so serious, that his personality becomes unadjusted in several phases to a degree that approaches disorganization.

There was a time when Richard was on very good terms with his father. The conflicts seem to

have developed as Richard grew older. This may have been due both to the ill health into which the father fell, as well as to efforts of Richard to assert what he felt to be his rights. In the case of Adolph and Alfred, the warfare is of long standing and seems to reflect a general condition of incompatibility.

Our division of these homes into these three general groups is not meant to convey the inference that the attitudes of any boy are rigidly unvarying. He may go from one extreme to the other in the course of a week on his own initiative or in his responses to the attitudes taken by different members of the household toward him and his doings. It is safe to reason that these documents are a true reflex of the commonest family reactions in each instance, for not one of them was written at the time of any great emotional tension in the family life.

There is a decided difference in amount and quality of the control exercised by the homes in group A and those in group C. In group A, the healthy state of the family morale is shown by a general willingness to sacrifice and work for the common welfare. Many differences of opinion may arise, but these are speedily ironed out and the family form a congenial unit. This happy state of affairs is produced, not so much by sharing in common activities, important as these are, but by each member letting the other members share his more personal thoughts and experiences with him.

In group C, the boy at first adopts a policy of submissiveness and lets himself be pushed into the

background. Some boys may continue passive in their attitudes; but, in every case, the boy grows more critical, becomes defiant at times, and finally, either gets out from under this coercion by going to college, or revolts from the domination by leaving home. The autocracy of parents may drive even a boy who only eats and sleeps at home into secession from the family life.

Economic and Community Influences

The neighborhoods in which these boys live depend, of course, upon the economic conditions of their parents. His place of residence almost determines in advance for any boy his companions, and the social customs and prescriptions which largely select his play life and problems, especially when he is in grammar school. Most city families move up socially every few years, if the position of the father changes favorably, or as the family become "better fixed" financially. This puts upon the growing boy special tests in the process of adjusting himself to the change.

Henry

I started in at the Wilson school, or the "Italian Americanization School." It really was an ordinary public school, but it was situated in the congested area of the city and was attended by a great many Italians. About seventy per cent of the children were foreigners. Those foreign kids thought that their teacher was just about "the woman" of the globe, and whatever she said was right. Things were going great, when we had to move. From this foreign district, we moved into a little better one. Here I was looked upon as a fairly smart

boy, and I skipped a grade. I went to the movies a great deal and began to worship Bill Hart or Tom Mix.

Again we moved, and this time to a superior neighborhood. The boys were of a high type and played more baseball than I had experienced before. I was always the last to be chosen and the first to be "canned," when a better player came along. They made me believe that I was a "sissy." I was pretty good for my size, so they told me, but not good enough.

The mobility factor, it is easy to perceive, exercised a decided influence upon Henry. One group taught him to think that he was "a sissy," while in another he was considered "a fairly smart boy." His experience as an athlete is described in detail in Chapter V.

Next we will consider George, who is born into a home which has a distinctive racial and cultural background, and will note the stabilizing influences which are conspicuously absent in more loosely bound homes. A race and culture, such as the Jewish, is under the dominion of deeply rooted, emotional customs and traditions, unknown to the average American boy.

George

My father was the youngest son in the large family of a pious and respected Jewish patriarch of southern Russia. His study of the Talmud and other Hebrew lore was interrupted by the death of his father. At the age of twelve, my father had to begin earning a living for himself and his mother. He went through many hard experiences in "the struggle for existence," which left him a pessimist, a cynic, and a doubter, on the one hand, a

philosopher, a humorist and a lover of education on the other.

My mother is the oldest daughter of a family of eight, in which there is only one son. The family was modern to the extent that the girls were sent to the public school. My mother was taught Hebrew, and still clings to some of the old beliefs and prejudices. For instance, she will not listen to anything that questions the existence of the God of her fathers. Outside of this she is good, generous and self-sacrificing.

My father always worked, so he was at home only a few hours of the day. Moreover, he went often to other cities to seek a job. I saw comparatively little of him. He was kind of an idol to me. From him I acquired a yearning for schooling. I respected his wisdom. From my mother I learned a host of desirable qualities, such as patience, generosity in service and goods, and industry.

My elder brother took so much attention, that I, as an infant, had little chance of being spoiled. As a little child I grew up strong and healthy, and from the influence of my mother I learned to fear God. In time I found that the community made it hard for boys to live right because of its false ideals. It emphasizes money and causes boys to choose their occupations according to money possibilities. This emphasis on the money motive influences thousands of boys, and sometimes I think that you and I are not able to do much about it.

It is not surprising to learn that George is thrifty, has a yearning for schooling, shows a critical attitude toward the rich, and becomes more or less infected by his father's pessimism and doubt as he grows older.

The following quoted material is a sample of how great the influence is of the economic factor on

personality, especially in the case of extreme poverty or wealth:

James

I was born in a little town in the West, where the weeds grew high, the rattlesnakes were plentiful, and where the beautiful sunflower was the only harvest. I was in this town for only two years, because my father found a day laborer's job in a near-by city, and we moved to the outskirts, where we lived in a part tent house.

My father, so far as I know, never dissipated in any form, and when he had work, he was fairly ambitious to keep the family going. He would quit his job, however, work on a new idea, and waste a couple of months looking for another job. He was lazy, and during the winter, if a few kind neighbors would help us out, he was perfectly satisfied to let it go at that.

My mother, at this time, had four little children running wild up and down the alleys, and a little baby, just born after we came to the city. In spite of this she took in washings and was comparatively happy. She was always aggressive and anxious that us kids be brought up under the best circumstances possible. She worked like this for two years, until she broke down, and it was necessary to put all of us in a home for awhile.

Mother used to come to see us often, but never our Dad. In fact, it was during this time that Father and Mother broke up living together. One day my Dad just naturally slipped out, never returning since. It was lucky that the place we had been living on had been purchased by a relative, and although there was a heavy mortgage on it, we were able to keep up the interest. My older brother was sent back East to live with relatives; and with my sister as the "mother" of us two younger boys, Mother working away from home, we

were able to establish ourselves again. The scene of my sister trying to teach me to read by an oil lamp, with Mother over in a dark corner over a tub, and my brother hanging to her skirts, has always stayed with me. We had no conveniences whatever.

Every phase of a boy's life is affected by extreme poverty of this kind. It is easy to argue over the compensating training inherent in a bitter struggle "to get along," but nevertheless its reactions upon personality may be disastrous. James learned to work and to save. He became dependable, industrious and alert to make the most of every situation. By no means, however, is it the rule that boys who come from a destitute home develop these strong traits of character. Even James was self-conscious over his clothes, and might have lost out in the struggle with the feelings of shame, embarrassment, and inferiority induced by his lack of status. His personality was in great danger of being shattered. It is these inner reactions which count most in determining personality.

Boys' Work and the Family

As a social agency grows in membership and diversifies its program of activities, there is a marked danger that its personal contacts with the home and parents of its members will fall in neglect. Good as a "Father and Son Banquet" may be in itself, it is a poor substitute for a personal visit to the same boy's home. Nor can a program of encouraging boys to engage in service tasks at home be of as much value as a Parent Study Club. Can the church,

the Young Men's Christian Association or any other social service agency do very much with any boy without going right down into the cultural, racial, economic, and neighborhood circumstances which surround him? Then it would be possible to help boys like Richard, Alfred and Adolph over many a stile by these more personal contacts. More intelligent coöperation would have meant a great deal to Fred's widowed mother, to the smoother working out of the Americanization process in Ralph's home, or to easing the strained attitudes which seem to be going from bad to worse in the homes of Verne and Harry. A real opportunity exists for social workers to extend the scope of adult education for parents.

The data supplied by these boys proves rather conclusively that for Boys' Work organizations to function most intelligently their contacts with the homes of their members must be much more extensive and intimate. Such a coöperation will be most effective on the basis of small neighborhoods or dealing with the parents of natural group units. Experiments of this nature are now being conducted by certain social organizations.

CHAPTER III

COMPANIONS AND SOCIAL GROUPS

EVERY high school boy is the center of a larger or smaller circle of friends. If the boy is popular, these friendships become quite numerous compared to one who keeps a good deal to himself. Those boys with whom he gets to be most intimate become his pals or chums. The rest of the concentric circle includes other good friends and in time fades out into acquaintances and those who are hardly distinguishable from entire strangers.

Some boys prefer to mingle with the group generally, while others like best to pair off and have their special friends even within their cliques and groups.

John

When I was younger most all my friends were in the "Y." I met some mighty good friends in the gym classes. In my later years I found most of my friends in the Hi-Y Club. When I want to have a good time, I go down to the "Y" and play games with some of my friends.

While John is content to mix somewhat promiscuously with the bunch to which he belongs, the next boy craves one or two real pals:

The desire of my life is to have a boy pal with whom I am always first. I have had a boy pal for over a year now. He is a wonderful fellow. We have bunked together, played together, worked together and are close friends, but lately he has been going around with a boy that I think is beneath him. In spite of his many fine qualities, he is selfish and cruel at times. He seems to enjoy flaunting his preference for this other boy before me. I don't know whether he realizes how much it hurts me or not.[1]

Factors Which Promote Intimacy

How boys get along in what they do together has an important bearing in the strengthening or the dissolution of their friendships. But this joint activity is not all there is to the relationship. Accordingly it may be helpful to single out three factors which appear in the full round of social interaction, namely, (1) Association in activity, (2) Sharing confidences, and (3) Emotional attraction or repulsion. The index numbers below refer to these classifications.

James

Last New Year's Eve my chum and I decided to go skating—to skate the Old Year out and the New Year in (1). We went to a certain park where we met some of our friends. While we were playing tag, I pestered him by calling him a "wind bag," and he called me a "dumb sock." Of course we didn't get sore (2). Another time we went fishing (1). There we related to each other incidents (2) and a real bond of friendship grew up which lasts to this day.

There is no limit in what we talk over with each other.

[1] Document No. 9.

We are not afraid that it will embarrass us (2). I can freely say that we have never kept secrets from each other. There is one thing my chum and I have never done, that is to talk about sex. We never even mention it.

Once in a while, when a party becomes a little dead, my chum and I "let off steam" (1). To do this, I make believe that I am drunk. After one of these parties I was walking down the sidewalk backward and ran into a fellow about six feet tall, who almost knocked me down. My chum almost died laughing, and still jests me about it (2). My chum likes this stuff some of the time, but to keep it up too long may hurt our friendship.

The importance of association in activity appears in the following material from Charles:

Charles

Right now I have but one chum. He is a student in high school, like myself, and always in pranks (1). We keep on the good side of the teachers the best we can. He does not smoke or "cuss," neither do I. We both like about the same things (1). We go to basketball games and shows together. Nearly every place he goes, I go, or the other way round. He's great on going out to the woods, and so am I (1). He has a hobby, I guess you would call it. He can "throw" a mean drawing pen. He has a fine eye for perspective and distance. I draw some myself, but I seldom make pencil sketches. We sit around the house drawing each other and other comic pictures. (Say, that was a bad break.)

I've talked a lot with my friend about girls, jobs, habits, and various problems (2). We talk about the kind of a girl we would want to marry, and then laugh it off, because there never would be a girl who could come up to our expectations.

Verne

I'm going around with a fellow who works in a gasoline station after school and Saturdays. Friday we're going down town to a movie. I get our car in the afternoon, so we can go riding (1). [A month or so later, Verne wrote about his pal again:] I'm very much interested in my pal just now. His father has had a stroke of paralysis and they know he'll never get back to work. My pal has to quit school. Gee, I feel sorry for him (3), but there is nothing I can do. He was planning on going East to a Prep school this fall. I hate to think of him going (3) but I feel worse when I think of him going to work.

1. Association in Activity

There seem to be three varieties of activity in these documents. First, there is participation in a project carried on by a group, as when chums play on the same team, go to parties together, or attend Scout meetings. Second, there are the kinds of activities which chums often carry on by themselves, as skating, hikes to the woods, auto trips or sketching. Third, we note those aimless forms of horseplay, pranks and what the boys speak of as "monkey work," which nevertheless are surprisingly effective in strengthening the bond of friendship. This in spite of the risk that they may be sometimes carried too far, and then it may weaken the relationship, or get the boys in trouble with those who are in charge of the formal activities of a group club, or the school. The personality of the boy is strengthened in the degree that one form of activity or the other affords opportunities of gaining status and recognition in the eyes of other people.

2. Sharing Confidences

Boys who are chums, find many things to talk about privately. First, certain topics of conversation grow out of the activities which they share together. All kinds of things are apt to happen in a Hi-Y club, Boy Scout troop, or at school, to supply material for conversation. Likewise, a common hobby, such as drawing or mechanics, naturally get much talked about. Second, certain staple problems of boy life, such as girls, jobs, college, and home difficulties, furnish material for endless debate. Third, they plan out coming events together or build air castles around some fanciful camping trip, or speculate about why this or that acquaintance did thus and so. The way that motor-minded boys participate in activity for the sheer relief of action is reflected in the documents of Charles and James. In the fourth place, chums are apt to tell personal incidents and stories to their pals, which they hide from others. If they grow particularly confidential and share their most cherished secrets, it is as Charles indicates "when nobody is around." As James suggests, some topics, such as sex, may be treated as taboo, but this is unusual in the long run. Finally, pals criticize and praise each other, and pass off things which they do not relish, with a laugh. The endless conversations which go on among high school boys afford an outlet for their intellectual interests and release for emotional tensions which are significant forces in the development of personality.

3. Emotional Attraction or Repulsion

Two boys may trudge along through the woods,

without saying a single word to each other for quite a time, and still there may be rich and rewarding companionship, provided some psychic or magnetic factor has drawn these boys together in an intimate way. They are willing prisoners of its spell. Difficult as this psychic element is for the boys, or indeed anyone else to describe, that does not diminish its importance in any degree. This factor is more actively at work in the atmosphere of life at camp, or in companionship out of doors than in attendance upon a lecture or a church party. Social situations where two boys can break apart from the group and be alone together for a spell conserve and promote this closer friendship. The sentiment-building factor is greatly emphasized on such occasions. Under these conditions a fellow feeling arises which makes chums "mind readers," so to speak, and a considerable degree of intuition is common between them.

In the document which follows, Harry confesses his inability to establish this psychic bond with others no matter how much he may wish to do so, and, as a result, he feels that there is something missing in his personality:

Harry

I want to say that there is one thing that has always puzzled me. I have very many friends but no special chums. I am fairly friendly with many, but not especially friendly with anyone. On the other hand, I am trying constantly to be more friendly every day, but there seems to be something lacking.

One of the places I have noticed this most was in camp. There was a fellow of my age leading another tent. He always had a group of boys talking with him.

I had some friendly boys in camp, but it was a more distant friendship. This leader and I are good chums at camp and on the basketball squad at school, and yet, I couldn't tell you his inside thoughts the way some fellows could of their friends.

Then there is the camp director. I have known him four years. I have gone to see him, talked with him, and tried to be friendly. Yet, I do not feel close to him, as I think other fellows do. He does things for me and holds our friendship dearly, but he seems to do things for other fellows and be more familiar with them than with me.

Some observers contend that these more intimate attachments between boys are promoted too much among high school boys by recreational and educational activities in isolation from girls. Be this as it may, the fixation of a boy on a companion of his own sex is commonly wholesome at this age. Such attachments may be between boys of an age, or as the next document suggests, between an older leader and younger boys:

Ralph

I wondered whether I was doing right in going to the "Y" camp as a volunteer leader. Would it pay? It did! Besides all the experience—priceless experience—and friendships, I formed one friendship of supreme value. The boys liked me, the leaders liked me, and the staff liked me. What more could I ask?

One of these fellows, the one with whom we had some trouble in camp, writes me often, now that I am away at school, and seems to think a lot of me.

Ralph was not drawn to just this one younger boy but to almost any needy little urchin. There was a

sympathetic pull which he could not resist. This marks him out as one likely to respond to the vocational appeal of Social Service, and especially Boys' Work. This affection which is frequently spoken of as homosexual in character, has great possibilities for good leadership in it.

Some Problems of Group Life

In addition to pals and chums, nearly every boy craves membership in groups composed of boys of his own age, not at all because he is a pawn of a "gang instinct," as some would say, but simply because boys are social creatures. High school clubs in the beginning, as a rule, are fabricated associations, rather than natural units; but they settle down into cliques in a short time, if the association is frequent and intensive. First in importance among high school boys are the groups which arise in the formation of athletic teams. Frequent opportunities for association in vital ways in practice sessions, and otherwise, develop close and real comradeships. Moreover, as soon as a boy "makes the team" that distinction wins him a popularity by which he is drawn into other groups. Any Hi-Y Club, social set, or clique covets the prestige which he will add to their group.

Other groups attract certain of the boys who possess little or no athletic ability. Some of these join a debating or literary society, a science or one of the other school clubs, and a few of them are received into an Honor Society. Still others enter actively into social life and compete for the honor of becoming known as "the best dancer," or are active in class organizations and school politics. All of these

tendencies can be interpreted to signify that these boys are making efforts to gain group prestige. The list of groups, offices and activities which accompany a student's name in *The School Annual* indicates the extent of his participation in the group side of high school life.

Then, of course, high school boys belong to scores of formal and informal groups outside the school influence. A recent study in Evanston high school indicates that eighteen per cent of the boys belong to the Y. M. C. A., twelve per cent to Boy Scout troops, five per cent to church athletic teams, and sixteen per cent to church young people's societies. In many cases a boy may belong to several clubs. Ten per cent of the pupils belong to school clubs, and twenty-five per cent to organized clubs outside the jurisdiction of the school.

Not every high school boy is fortunate enough to get into the inner circle of the group or club to which he belongs. Several of the boys embraced in this study remained outsiders in this sense. Even though they mingled in the affairs of the group, they played such minor parts that their absence would not have been much noted.

Adolph is a typical instance of more or less complete isolation. In trying to rationalize and explain it to himself, he lays it to the fact that wearing glasses made it impossible for him to fight or keep up his end of the games in the group. In addition, he decided that he is over-critical.

Adolph

I did not mingle very much with other boys at any time during my life. When I was eight years old, I began

to wear glasses, which seemed to create an invisible barrier between myself and others. I could not join in rough games, because of the fear of breaking my glasses. I became afraid of fellows, even smaller than myself, because I could not fight when challenged. Perhaps too, I was over-critical of other boys.

George gives quite a different account to himself of his experience of isolation.

George

My brother introduced me into a social club of Jewish boys and girls at the Synagogue. The boys were divided into two factions, which in time caused the disruption of the club. The meetings of the group were a noisy, disorganized affair, and I didn't like them. I did stay long enough to learn to dance and I got used to girls.

Some of the bunch belonged to an athletic club and I tried to become a basketball player. Although I was a hideous failure, I didn't know it at the time. The fellows tolerated me. I did not go with the bunch much, because they had the expensive habit of "watering up" at the soda fountain a few times a day.

The next is a case of open opposition to the dominant characteristics of the group. Although Alfred went to church and attended classes at the Y. M. C. A. he never managed to belong to any group in an intimate way. When he went to work one summer, he broke out in open rebellion against his associates.

Alfred

All of the clerks I worked with in the office that summer seemed to be men who had quit school in the elementary grades, and had no conception of the value of

life, or the "Golden Rule." I felt lonesome, for I could pal with no one. I had to work with Wilson and one day I had a fight with him. The next day I had a row with Hansen. These two selfish, unspiritual and all-for-self fellows were the men I had to associate with.

June 29th. The foreman reported to the Superintendent that I couldn't get along with the rest of the clerks and recommended my removal. Things began to finish quickly then. This crowd of "eighth graders" said that, as a kid, no one wanted to hurt me. O'Brien, however, took it upon himself to instigate a fight with another clerk who was just my size and weight. This "would-be-bully" easily found a way to pick an argument. He purposely dropped an ink well on my shirt. We had a little argument and the bully said he was going to beat "the living hell" out of me at lunch time. I certainly had a poor knowledge of mob psychology. The mob was all against me. I defied the whole bunch. I knew I was in for a good licking. In an incident of this kind, I always prayed in my mind.

That noon I rushed at this clerk just as he came out of the door. I got in blow for blow, until we clinched and rolled down the flight of steps in front of the office building. The other clerk got the worst of it in the fall and was dazed. I felt as fresh as ever and went after him before he had a chance to recover. This put me in bad with the crowd and they dragged me off my opponent. A policeman took us by the collar and I was in the Superintendent's office again.

I had no interest in the things the clerks talked about. They always talked of baseball, the sporting sheet and sex. I could talk with no one about my ambitions or confide anything that was on my heart. I had to remain away from the group. I spent nine long, dreary hours a day for thirty days a month in work that I took no interest in, and with fellows I could not associate with.

During these long hours I went back to my old tricks again. I did not like the world I was in, so I made one of my own in imagination.

It is only fair to add that Alfred was very sensitive regarding a slight defect in his speech, which was really not particularly noticeable, except when he was excited. In his own mind, however, he dwelt upon and magnified this defect, which led him, in addition, to read into the actions of others contemptuous or hostile attitudes of which in all probability they were not guilty. He tries to escape from his weakness and inability to adjust himself socially by letting his imagination conjure up fictitious situations in which he is made to appear to better advantage. Although the Secretary at the Y. M. C. A. had known Alfred for three years, he never was aware of his particular maladjustment.

Group life requires its members to put in a certain amount of loafing and to keep up a routine long after all real profit and pleasure in it has ceased. A swim with the gang is a case in point. Some want to stay on and on until it gets to be boring to others of the group. In addition, boys with cleaner minds often find the group too careless in some respects in speech or conduct. One or two members may think it "funny" to indulge in suggestive talk or other doubtful practices to which they feel like taking exception. This conflict between different ideals and group standards crops out in these two documents from Hi-Y fellows:

Some of the groups that I would pal around with would tell dirty stories, swear and smoke cigarettes.

These things put an idea in my head. I decided to get away from that group and put one over on them by building myself up morally and spiritually, as well as physically.[2]

I really appreciate this bunch more after spending a couple of evenings with the other gang. One bunch I found were rotten in speech and habits. I can say I never heard many of the Hi-Y fellows say anything smutty, though occasionally some of them did swear, but it never was very strong.[3]

To speak out against an evil may require more courage than many boys possess, for it is likely to lead to ridicule and to classification as a "sissy." The less costly thing to do apparently is to keep still.

Every group dislikes certain types of fellows. It extends little or no welcome to the boy who cannot contribute something—in funds, ability, in petty graft, or in entertainment, etc. Likewise, small toleration is granted to chaps who are critical or who oppose the majority wishes and interests of the group. Such an individualist is soon out of its activities. Finally, the boy who acts a bit queer, who differs definitely in his tastes from the group, or whose appearance is odd, may not be "made at home" in the group but is apt to become the target of ridicule. Boys of this stamp are soon spotted and given nicknames, such as, "bookworm," "goofy," "four eyes," or "punk." Even high school boys seldom display the intelligence and sympathy required to assimilate boys of this type into their

[2] Document No. 10.
[3] Document No. 11.

groups. It is not surprising, therefore, that Alfred should feel "lonesome for a pal."

As high schools grow in size to one or several thousand boys and girls, the problem of social adjustment becomes an increasingly serious one. Their halls throng with pupils who make few or no permanent friendships. Associations of deep intimacy are never any too easy to form, and a cordial welcome by this or that group is exceedingly difficult of attainment for the person not possessed of exceptional ability, personal distinction, or socially attractive qualities.

The impersonal nature of contacts in large high schools militates against the growth of the more intimate contacts which are to be found in small-town associations. Clarence describes how students nod to one another in classes, become slightly acquainted for a short season but the next semester are likely to be completely separated. In addition, outside of school hours, these same speaking acquaintances may have little or no contact for they come from widely separated neighborhoods. This aspect of city life makes this whole matter of how friendships are to be formed between boys more and more of a problem.

Clarence

The studies of our school are all very hard. Since it is a boys' school only, they pile on the home work thick. If we do make friends, they are not constant. They are the kind that ask for "ponies" in a test, and consequently, if you give them your paper, you are a friend. Boiling it all down, acquaintances, I have many, but

friends, I have few. I am a pretty good mixer, but I don't want to be friends with a bunch of "hard boiled" fellows, or the too studious kind. It is a hard job, and many times, in fact most times, I fail to find friends. Outside of school, my time is taken up with home work and music, so I cannot belong to a school club or an outside club.

George

At the age of thirteen, I entered high school; my brother with me. I was more or less bashful or retiring. I never avoided meeting people, but I seldom made advances. It was a kind of passive, let-things-happen-as-they-will attitude. I got to be on friendly terms with a great number of fellows in my classes; that is, we would say "hello" in the corridors, and talk about how to do a problem, or what we made in the exam, but relatively little of even this. I did have some closer friends, in a Scout troop my brother brought me into. We went on hikes together.

In my senior year, I got to know more of the fellows. The closest friendships were with the members of the Torch Club into which I was elected. Still we weren't real chums, because we lived too widely separated, or because some went with girls while I was reserved on that matter.

The family was always moving about from one section of the city to another, because of work conditions. We never lived in one spot longer than three years, and in that time, usually we occupied three or four neighborhoods. My brother, therefore, was my only permanent companion.

The frequency with which families who rent their living quarters move about from one neighborhood to another quite distant, or in a different city in-

volves giving up old acquaintances and starting in all over again to make new ones every little while. Since the process of building deep-rooted friendships, which influence personality in a vital manner, is not a matter of a few days but takes many months, even years, the children of these households are at a great disadvantage in this respect, as well as in the frequent readjustments to different school systems, churches, etc., required of them.

In a small town, soon after two boys meet they can find out all they need to know about each other's social connections. In a large city, however, this is not so easy. Perhaps simple ignorance accounts for some of the suspicion which Clarence feels toward certain other boys in his school whom he charges are careless in their morals.

Harry

The town I live in is made up of a great number of foreigners and though it is hard to believe, there aren't six fellows in my school association that I even go out with to the movies. Most of the rest are in clubs and fraternities outside of school. These few are the only ones I ever go with in town, very often.

Some Group Experiences

The desire to belong to groups leads some boys to join more of them than is good for their own welfare. Membership in a group helps to confer standing and make a boy believe that "he is somebody." Once in, there is always the possibility of rising to a place of influence, and the additional sense of distinction which follows.

John

In school I am a member of three clubs—the Hi-Y, Phi Kappa, and The Presidents' Club. I was elected president of the Hi-Y Club for the next year. I was secretary of the Phi Kappa, a literary club. I was president of the Junior Class last year and was entitled to be a member of the Presidents' Club, a club that meets with the Principal for a discussion of student activities.

Harold

On Monday night, I go to our DeMolay basketball team practice. On Tuesday, I go to DeMolay meetings. On Wednesday, our team always plays our games. On Thursday, I go right from Hi-Y meeting to my debating society, and on Friday I don't go any place in particular. On Sunday I go to Sunday school, where I am the secretary of the elementary department. Then I meet the bunch I run around with at another church, and we "mess around" in the afternoon. Usually in the evening I have a date or go to church or something.

There are certain aspects of group life which affect the personality of a high school boy strongly that may be studied from the material supplied by the boys.

1. Getting into Groups

The mysterious gift or knack of making acquaintances is a chief qualification. There is seldom an open gate to membership by which any boy can gain entrance. While ostensibly membership in a Bible school class, a Boy Scout troop, or a gymnasium class may be open to any chance comer, in

reality, the group can make it so uncomfortable for any boy it does not like that he will soon drop out.

Donald

I have belonged to only a few gangs or clubs, but I have derived the most good from the Hi-Y Club. A few years ago, in the summer time, several of the fellows around the neighborhood walked to a small swimming hole about once a day, but this was made up of a tough gang, so I dropped them.

When a sophomore in high school, I saw a notice on the blackboard which told of a meeting to be held. As I was not acquainted with many people in school, I did not know what the club was like. Near the end of the year I learned more about it, and I attended a meeting. I cannot say that I liked it at first, but I went again and again, until I became very much interested.

James

I used to go with my brother to Scout meetings and got real interested in them. After awhile, the church we had attended decided to start a troop. It got started and continues to this day, although there is a different man at the head of it.

The first thing I did when I became a member was to get on the good side of the fellows. I participated in all the activities and became popular with the boys. It was only a matter of time until I was one of the leaders.

Occasionally high school boys begin to develop ideals and standards which determine the groups into which they fall. Don's attitude toward the swimming hole gang is an instance. As a general rule, however, circumstances largely decide what groups, few or many, they become associated with. In cases like that of James, an older brother is a big factor.

A friend within one group may get a boy into a second to which he belongs. Some of the steps which end up in group membership are well stated by Donald. These steps are significant for the influence on his personality. He is quite a different person when outside looking in, as contrasted with the rôle of a leader in the group a year later.

The groups of which he becomes a member are an index to a boy's friends and companions. The decisive importance of this element in the life of a boy has always been perceived by parents. The impingement of one personality upon another in these close contacts and intimate relationships, where a boy is fairly free to choose, greatly changes boys for better or worse. The conduct and opinions of each member tend to approach the viewpoints, ideals and practices of the group. During this experience every boy gives up something of his own will in deference to the social dictates of the group. The more frequent, prolonged, and intimate the contacts are, of course, the more severe is the test which they constitute in this matter. Especially in fabricated groups, or groups with a social and religious purpose, it is possible for any member of the group definitely to influence the patterns of the group, as well as share in the practices in vogue; and of course it is up to every boy to choose between groups of differing activities and ideals which he will join.

2. The Interests and Activities of the Group

The group originates new and modifies old interests of its members. The only way of escape for a boy from this process of assimilation which is alter-

ing and modifying his interests for better or for worse is to drop out of the group. And frequently a group which fails to choose an interesting type of activity will gradually disintegrate and disband. In speaking of the Hi-Y Club, Martin writes:

Martin

Now let me give you some advice. Don't let your club members forget the promises they made. Make plans to freshen their memory of the initiation. I am seeing the great importance of this in the freshmen we took in last year. They seem to forget the purpose of the club. Right now there are 10 or 12 of us who are fighting, living, willing to do anything for the welfare of our school.

Donald

Early this fall our club had a Fathers and Sons Banquet. This helped a great deal to show what the club was doing. After the supper the program consisted of singing and talks. The owner of a large farm gave the talk of the evening.

Our regular meetings come every Wednesday noon. Every other meeting we have a Bible discussion in which our leader takes charge. The other sessions are for business and socials.

Verne

There has been quite a lot of bootlegging and wrong boy and girl relationships at our school, and the Hi-Y Club is beginning a campaign to stop it. We had our botany teacher talk on sexual problems. Then we expect to discuss the problems for three or four meetings. We have not decided how to finish it up, but probably it will be by a speaker before the entire school. Maybe in that way we can clean things up. Last May we had Dr.

Brown talk on sex and he did a lot of good. Our Hi-Y leader said afterwards that there wasn't a boy in the school who didn't need a speech like that. He showed the effects of venereal disease on people and their children.

While these documents do not give a complete description of the Hi-Y program at its best, still they call attention to certain problems which are inherent in the scheme of the organization and movement. First, the members accept a purpose centering around the attainment of Christian character drawn up for them by adults, and the rank and file of the organization may never quite understand its significance either for themselves as individuals or for the school. As Martin says, "Don't let the members forget their promises." Second, the group may have little or no influence in the larger school life. It is necessary constantly to advertise themselves, as Donald points out, through Fathers and Sons Banquets, or other means. Finally, when they do champion some altruistic cause in the school, they may get labeled as reformers and defeat their purpose. Nevertheless, many of the members gain real inspiration from the Hi-Y program, and the general procedure gives many boys a stimulus to do their best, individually and as a group.

There are marked differences in program between the organized type of club and the cliques which grow up of themselves among high school boys. The following documents reflect some of these differences:

About my Junior year in high school, I got in with

another gang, or rather it was the old gang grown up. One of the bunch had a car. Whenever we needed tires, or anything else, we just jumped into the car and went and found some lonesome little Ford and took what we wanted. We built a shack over by the river. Then we would go to some near-by town, find what we wanted for eats and come back for a party. Our motto was "Get everything you can from a rich man, but never rob a poor man." One of the fellows lived right near the school. His parents never cared what time we came or what time we left at night. The door was always open. We used to play cards there until two o'clock in the morning, lots of times.[4]

In the Fall we had a corner lot football team. Boy, the scrimmage we used to have! We didn't have so many games, but we practiced like a regular team. Soon the leaves began to fall, and King Winter's icy fingers crept over the land. We hailed the approach of winter with snowball fights and coasting. We never had a leader. We were all leaders. We never planned a program. There was always a program for us to do. We always looked for fun and enjoyment.[5]

The activities of the gang or clique exhibit more of an element of spontaneity. The boys come together without any previous plans, and wait until someone suggests something. The proceedings grow out of those situations which occur that afford opportunity for a certain amount of fun or excitement. The elements of daring, fighting, annoying others, and trying to be tough, enter into much of the doings in the case of older, as well as the younger boy gangs.

[4] Document No. 14.
[5] Document No. 15.

A different character attaches to doings in a club, such as the Hi-Y or Boy Scout program. What they do is the subject of a good deal of planning in accord with a purpose, partially in line with fun, but with possibilities for education, religious development, and social good. The boys may take over certain activities designed for their own good and for the best interest of the school or institution. Instead of leisurely drifting along in a haphazard manner, a club can be said to be moving in a definite direction. In the course of a year, a club group accomplishes something of permanent value to its members usually in addition to having a good time. It may get to be known in the school, church or community by what it does as a group, just as a person may build up a reputation for helpfulness.

The more varied the activities, the more diversely does participation affect the personality of the individuals composing the group. Public speaking, debates and athletics call for somewhat different talents and training than attendance upon a theater party, a Fathers and Sons Banquet, or the sessions of a Bible discussion group. Every high school boy should have opportunities to excel in the eyes of the group for the normal development of his personality. This point is recognized in the conversations of the boys as they talk about having the prettiest girl present at the party, or the best dancer, or in the way they try to show off.

3. Group Leadership and Control

Who is to run the group? Who is to determine its policies? Is the club just a tool in the hands

of an adult by which to control the behavior of boys? These questions are very important in the case of the supervised group club, for well-meaning adults frequently attempt to dominate them. Perhaps this is why many boys, as they grow older, drop out of groups of this nature. Furthermore, as has been mentioned, the place into which each boy falls in the life of the group involves important determinants of personality.

The actual control of one group from within, as exercised in a real situation is described in this next document:

John

Our Hi-Y Club had a party. In the midst of it, one of the members came in drunk. We had never received such a shock in our lives before. Immediately another fellow went out and drank some—just enough to smell it on his breath. As soon as we could, we broke up the party. At our next Hi-Y meeting, "Hot Dog," we got right down to business. I never saw a better meeting in my life. First the President said he thought we owed the member who gave the party an apology. We agreed with him. Some spoke up and said how disgusting it was. A thing, I believe, that helped was the fact that our Sponsor was not there. It made the fellows open up. Then we asked for the resignation of the fellows who did the drinking. The two fellows resigned and I believe it helped the club more than anything to clear up the situation.

I haven't gotten over the shock yet. Thank goodness, I didn't have a date that night, nor did my pal. I don't think there is as much drinking as the older people say there is. Our club learned that we must be more careful about the type of boys we take into membership.

Groups with a religious objective, in some ways, are the most intolerant. It may be argued that the above group should have tried to recover these members, rather than clear its own reputation by ostracizing the two boys who started the drinking. Ousting them lowered their personality rating to that of "bad eggs," "tough guys," "smart alecks," "rowdies," "racketeers," "hoodlums," or "outcasts" in the eyes of the respectable citizens of the school.

The occupancy of a place of leadership or prominence in any group carries an important reaction with it on the individual's own personality. In some groups the leadership passes around, shifting from one boy to another, without a great deal of premeditation, according as the group engages in athletics, entertaining the girls, discussions of problems, or going on some excursion. In other groups there will be one figure dominant on all occasions, as indicated in the following document:

In a certain school there was a pretty well organized gang of boys. Although they had no formal elections, a certain boy was regarded as its leader, and the rest of the boys did as he suggested. An example of this appeared in school politics. In every election, this leader had a candidate for the offices, and the fact that he nominated that person made it almost certain that the gang would vote solidly in favor of that person. In case he did not make a nomination, he would indicate by a whisper whom to support. Not only did the entire group vote in this manner, but a younger bunch who admired this hero supported him in elections.[6]

In groups operating under adult supervision, the

[6] Document No. 16.

selection of the boy leaders may be indirectly influenced or controlled by the supervisor. The way in which Donald rises from a shy, backward lad to a place of outstanding leadership in the group is a case in point. The initial changes in his personality which finally prepared him for this place of prominence were brought about by the personal attention bestowed upon him by the club adviser.

Donald

After entering high school, I became greatly interested in the Hi-Y Club. I have attended every meeting since I joined. I have been on several committees, given several talks, have been vice-president, and I expect to be elected an officer this coming year. Being from the country "backwoods," as the town people say, I was left out of many things when I entered high school. I had only one companion then, but since I joined the Hi-Y Club, I have developed many friendships. The leader of the club has helped me very much in my progress.

The more carefree type of groups chafes under the restraining influences exercised by an adult leader. His mere presence, even if he is not the kind which insists upon dominating the program or conduct of the group, produces a change in psychic atmosphere. The boys are bound to be more cautious. One of the boys expresses his attitudes in this manner:

We have always taken care of ourselves as a group. About two months ago we decided to go to see if we could use a gym. Some of our fellows thought they would like to form a basketball team. We have been getting along pretty good with the Director of the place,

Mr. Carl. Part of the time Mr. Carl has been too busy to be with us. He seems to think we can't get along by ourselves. We don't care much for the place, except to go to gym.[7]

High school boys have a love of independence and as one says, "I don't see why we can't take care of ourselves." However, this need not bar them from fellowship with teachers and other adult leaders, unless they are committed to courses of conduct which are questionable in value. The reason for this dislike of outside advice arises, in a way, from the insistence of the counselor on enforcing regulations of decency. In general, advisers need to be less domineering and paternalistic in their attitudes. Likewise, the boys themselves might well be less touchy and show more confidence in the good intentions of many of their adult leaders.

A group which is to exist for any length of time, or which is to have an influence in the school or community, must develop a high degree of cohesiveness. Various factors unite in the formation of this bond of solidarity. The first is the very common desire for association with pals and friends. Just spending time together is to them a satisfying experience. They do not wish, on these occasions, to make plans or indeed to do anything at all except to be together. In fact, to switch the attention of the group to some practical problem at such times would be to destroy the mood of good fellowship in which they are basking. Frequent contacts are essential for these spells of communion.

[7] Document No. 17.

The second factor contributing to homogeneity is participation in common activities, ideas and interests. Certain individuals may like to dance, or to play golf together, and so they gravitate toward one another. Or, there may be much in common about their ideas concerning education, religion and amusements. These similarities in tastes prepare the way for them to share life together rather quickly and fully. Such people seem to understand one another easily. As we say, "Birds of a feather flock together"; or as the psychologist would put it, "The individuals in the group respond in a relatively uniform manner to the same stimuli."

There are many, it is true, who join groups primarily for personal profit. Indeed, even church and Boys' Work programs lay stress on what their members will get out of them, as a motive for joining. Then, too, the boys themselves, in their endeavors to brace up a delinquent member, put the emphasis on what he is missing. On the other hand, group interest disintegrates, more or less, when self-interest is given a free hand.

Another factor productive of increased loyalty to the group is allegiance to a cause. Whereas the factors previously mentioned center around the individual, this is social in character. Besides the sacrifices for the group, which each member makes more or less for his own benefit, in giving himself to the advancement of a cause, he is working for the advancement of others. To the inducements of self-protection and self-advancement held out by the unorganized gang or clique, the Hi-Y Club offers this new inducement of disinterested service in a

good cause. And boy human nature is so made as to respond to right appeals to engage in work which counts toward some larger end than mere personal profit.

Indeed in the process of identifying himself with an altruistic group or cause, a high school boy will often become a different personality. It stabilizes him, if it is not too visionary. He ceases to be so inclined to drift. He wants to be worthy of the place of distinction conferred upon him in relation to the other boys in school by the pin which he wears as a token that he is one of a group whose members circle the globe. Many boys become aware of this larger self, or personality, at a State Older Boys' Conference, composed as it is of a thousand or more lads.

Fabricated groups find it necessary to exert themselves if they are to hold their membership intact and nurture their loyalty to the group. It is with this end in view that they select a club name, draw up rules and regulations, seek to build up a reputation for their group, assign their members tasks, carry on traditions, run off interesting programs, limit the membership intake, devise ceremonies to impress their ideals, rent quarters for a meeting place, wear uniforms, and accumulate a treasury, if possible.

Once the psychic bond becomes strong and firm, it is surprising how willingly and cheerfully the average high school boy stands ready to sacrifice himself for the best interest of the group or the cause it sponsors. The old spirit of "do as I please" gives way to a new spirit of devotion to the welfare of the group.

The Group and Boys' Work

The standard plan of organization among younger boys in churches and Y. M. C. A.s, is to limit the size of the club to small units of about the same age; but among older boys, the size of groups varies considerably. Groups of twenty-five to thirty-five are very common in Hi-Y work; and in the De-Molay, groups run from twenty-five to several hundred. Membership in a large group carries with it a sense of distinction, and this appeals to many boys, for mass and size is a common basis of evaluation among boys.

When Boys' Workers first came to the conclusion, less than twenty years ago, that the small group was the best basis for character education among boys, the various types of groups and their respective characteristics became the object of special study. Boys' Workers either tried to make fabricated groups, such as Bible classes and clubs, over into natural groups, or they decided to work with the already existing neighborhood gangs and cliques. Following this came experimentation aimed at achieving more democratic ways of management in group affairs by the boys. Methods were sought which would break up the tendency to depend upon the leader to do the managing, and to throw more and more responsibility upon the boys to work out their own solutions of their problems. The Hi-Y Clubs have never had a set or rigid program. Beyond suggestions in developing club programs along service and devotional lines, the boys have been left to exercise their own wits. Consequently, the

Hi-Y program in operation has been more successful in stimulating individual growth in personality, than in organizing groups strong enough to influence the general conduct of the school in any marked way.

Experience shows it to be relatively easy to organize any bunch of high school boys into an amusement club, and the more ambitious individuals respond readily to projects of self-advancement. Whether any large proportion will respond to programs of an altruistic nature, or those which involve allegiance to a cause, is difficult to say. As far as the limited number of school leaders developed among the boys themselves is concerned, the Hi-Y Club indicates that it can be done. It may be, however, that the Hi-Y Club is attempting something at this lower age level, which is more adapted to college men, something only a comparatively few of the more advanced and matured individuals in high school will respond to. On the other hand, more careful study of this point might reveal that many high school boys are drifting, because no one has presented rightly to them a program of social values with which they can identify themselves.

The situations which a Hi-Y Club may create in developing cross-purposes, with their accompanying emotional conflicts, through challenges to boys to live the good life, have not yet received as careful consideration as they deserve. Many of the boys who go hear discussions and talks at Older Boys' Conferences which result in decisions to live the better life. If these boys go back to homes, churches and neighborhoods which make it fairly easy for them

to live according to their new decisions, all goes well. But if the environment to which they return be antagonistic, then inward conflicts are likely to arise between the fidelity to the new purpose and the hostile pulls of old surroundings. Were these boys dealt with one by one, rather than in the mass, the possibilities of disastrous results would be much reduced. If the function of Boy's Work is that of aiding boys in their difficult task of achieving more integrated personalities, then more effective follow-up methods must be discovered in dealing with these boys in high school whom they have awakened.

Many Boys' Workers have been too content to promote mass activities and consider their major task ended. They watch how Alfred and Adolph carry on in the large group but seldom consider what internal conflicts these same boys may be wrestling with in private. Even when they go so far as to organize the group into smaller clubs, they do not undertake to see to it that every boy has a niche into which he can fit with distinction. After a few boys have been elected to places of leadership, they have been apt to rest content, as long as the group goes on operating smoothly. As for the boy who finds it difficult or impossible to induce a group to accept him as a member, Boys' Workers have largely left him to his fate.

It is well to bear in mind that congenial human relationships constitute a very important index of the abundant life. The right kind of friendships deeply enrich the soul of a boy. They undoubtedly make his life more worth living. Two boys express

themselves on this important element in growth of personality:

Henry

I was wondering, if I should lose my interest in life, in my fellows and in my school. If I should take things easy, and fall into bad habits. If I should start to smoke, to drink, to swear, and be dirty, what would my friends think? They would try to avoid me and ostracize me, because they are friends of the right kind.

I know from experience that it is easier to scoff and knock my friends, than to try and help them. But the joy in life comes from being a pal and in helping your friends.

Fred

Friends are the flowers of life, one more beautiful than the other, each having different colors, which we in human life would call personality. Some are large and some small—each having good words for you as the flowers have different perfume. They are with you while you are sick in order to cheer. They are with you to bring smiles and wonderful dreams. And when we are sad, they do the same. When a friend is lost, you die a little. We are lonely when we think the world does not care for us. The most important thing to do is to cherish and hold the flower, and care for it. So let it be with friends.

CHAPTER IV

HIS GIRL FRIENDS

One of the more important formative influences brought to bear upon the personality of the high school boy grows out of his friendship with the opposite sex. It is not that he has not mingled with girls in school or at church during the years of early boyhood, but rather that certain peculiar experiences come to him and to them during the adolescent years. Many consider these relationships to be by far the most fundamental in the development of the boy, representing as they do the first steps toward marriage, and the "preservation of the species." Others who agree in this estimate ascribe it to the fact that during this period "hetero-sexuality is established." In this chapter, however, an attempt will be made to extend the scope of the inquiry to include as many contacts of boys and girls as possible. All sides of the case—conflicts, companionship, sex behavior, together with the attitudes of parents, relatives, teachers, chums and social groups as they inter-act will be considered, to determine the various rôles which girls play in the lives of these high school boys.

Some high school boys claim to be "woman haters," others are indifferent toward the "fair sex,"

many feign more interest than they feel in order to secure invitations to parties, and not a few have real "crushes" on girls, which may turn out to be temporary or more permanent in character. In the data which Ray offers, it is possible by the dates given to trace the steps through which he passes from a nominal interest in girls to the making of his engagement.

Ray

I guess I will hit this girl question right away. I have two sisters, one 11 and the other 14 years old. They are quite an asset at times, and at other times they "get my goat." I think there are some real nice girls and some that are not quite so good. Somehow I don't like to see and to hear girls do things that boys do, such as smoking and swearing, but if we do such things, I suppose they think there is no reason why they should not. —January, 1925.

The subject of girls is not mentioned again in his letters for more than a year. Then, about the time be graduated from high school, he wrote:

Ray

No, I am not "girl crazy," but I think there are some mighty nice girls. I know a few of them and like to go out, but I do not keep a "steady." There is a very nice girl, one of my classmates, who lives in the lower flat. I have taken her out several times when we were at school. I was rather amused the other day when she mentioned, while talking to Mother in my presence, that she was not going to get married, but she was going to be a business woman, because she did not like to do house work.— February, 1926.

Again the subject of girls is not referred to in letters until eight months later.

Ray

In the middle of August I went to the lake for the week-end, where I attended an Epworth League Institute. The girl I had invited was sick, so I had a "blind date." First of all, I want to ask if you ever had what might be called a dream girl—one whom you picture in your dreams? Well, I had such a dream for a long time, but as I did not find any such girl, I finally thought I was expecting too much. I was about ready to give up, when this date was made for me. After I got to know her, my dearest wishes for a girl were fulfilled. This girl is not a "flapper," but she is good looking, well educated, pleasant and agreeable. She doesn't swear, smoke, or drink. She comes from a very fine family. Between you and me, I am in love with her—very much so. I wish I was through college and able to take the so-called, but wrongly named "fatal step."—October, 1926.

Ray

This girl has been a great help to me to live as a fellow should and not give in to the temptations which present themselves in this day and age. She is president of the Epworth League. I am not alone "in my game" but have two competitors, one of whom I have met—a nice fellow from a college near here. I say to myself at times, "Oh shoot, I wish he was a thousand miles away." —November, 1926.

Ray

Now, for the best of all—I am the most happy and proud announcer of the engagement of Lois and myself. I think I am the most lucky fellow in the world. We are both very happy, and both families are more than pleased, so everything is "hotsy-totsy" now. We are so

well matched that although we must wait a long time, yet I know we will be happy.—December, 1926.

These several episodes all related by the one boy reveal some of the more important stages common to experiences of older high school boys with girls. Boys begin with a period of nominal interest accompanied or followed by the desire to remain free rather than to have "a steady." Then, in time, the boy proceeds to the economic factor as it affects the time of marriage, or his imagination plays tricks upon him. Usually, a third party enters on the scene. A variety of these factors unite to produce the intense fixation of his attention on some one girl. Ray and Ralph are the only boys in the entire group whose experiences with girls culminated in their becoming engaged, and this did not happen until just after they had graduated from high school.

Upon the announcement of the engagement, Ray becomes a changed personality in his own estimation. New attitudes are taken toward him also by members of the several groups to which he belongs. In his own home, his parents and sisters begin to look upon him differently. A whole series of new adjustments are necessitated in his home by this settled prospect of a new addition to the family. His friends in church make changed comments about him. To an extent, the boy-group to which he belongs begins to count him out, for "he is going to be with Lois."

This changed status is referred to by his chum in an entry made only one month after the engagement is announced:

Verne

I suppose Ray has told you about the Club. We used to have good times, but now Ray is engaged and has to see Lois every night, so the rest of us have kind of departed. Last night after church, the fellows went walking. We stopped in a sweet shop and sat there for an hour. During our conversation we talked about Ray. We think he is kind of foolish, because whenever he is free he runs out to see her. They are very silly about it. All they do is gaze in each other's eyes. The rest of us are disgusted. We are wondering if he'll finish his education or not. It's terrible for them both, because neither of them ever went out much before they met.

Ray plans for college with his girl in mind. He drops some of his other interests to find more time for the things that she likes. His entire personality is reshaped by this experience and decision.

Getting Started with Girls

Very often a definite interest of boys in girls dates back into pre-adolescence. It is not uncommon for grammar school boys to associate with them and talk about "my girl."

When I was in the second grade, something like nine years ago, I fell in love with a girl—puppy love, of course. Our affections were mutual. I used to take her to a near-by show or buy candy for her. One Christmas, I gave her a ten-cent handkerchief and she gave me a pencil. Later we went to different high schools, but Friday I took her out, just for old-times sake. We both found that the old romance is not yet dead.[1]

[1] Document No. 17.

Fred

My first real affection goes back to when I was twelve years old when I fought a chap for a girl. All through my life I've not specialized on any one girl in particular. My motto was "safety in numbers." Most of the girls I had were real chums and we talked of matters freely. I think that is why I have retained their respect and comradeship right up to the present day.

John

Yes, I was a "girl-hater" about three years ago. I don't know what started me to going with girls. I expect it was because the rest of the fellows started in. It seemed, on my first dates, that everything went wrong. Everytime I did something wrong or made a mistake, I thought I was ruined with the girls. But I learned in time.

John's statement, "I don't know what started me. I expect it was because the rest of the fellows started in," raises the question as to how much the increased interest of boys in girls during adolescence is due to sexual development and how much to social custom. The wide variation in the age at which a special interest begins to be shown in girls casts some doubt on the attraction being entirely or primarily sexual.

The social pressure which encourages companionship with the opposite sex becomes more active during the last two years in high school. The document which follows bears on how it arises and functions.

James

At the Junior-Senior Banquet each fellow was supposed to get "a date." We were told a week beforehand,

which was a good thing for me. It took me about three days to get up courage to ask a certain girl to go with me. Finally Blanche said she would go, so I turned in our names to the class adviser. About four o'clock on the day of the banquet, Blanche came up to me and said, "Say, I'm in an awful fix." I asked her what the trouble was. Then she exploded the bomb. She had another date. I let the other fellow take her, for he was one of my best friends.

Some boys are afflicted during boyhood and adolescence with a degree of bashfulness which makes it extremely difficult for them to get on with girls. This has been attributed sometimes to the fact that boys are slower than girls in physiological growth. Again, it is urged that those boys who have played with girls in childhood on are not so apt to experience this embarrassment in their social adjustments, although there are exceptions.

Walter

I would have nothing to do with girls. When one would come around, my tongue would stick to the roof of my mouth, and my legs, arms, and neck would grow about twice as large as normal. I could never figure out "why," for I had two sisters of my own.

Charles

My childhood experience with girls was very limited, and what little I did have was a nightmare to me. So I had to learn at this later age. I was very bashful, but never a woman-hater. I never did dislike women that I can remember. I was pretty young when I started running with the girls. The first girl I ever took home was about a year older than me. It was raining and very

stormy. This girl lived out my way and asked me to take her home. I "nearly kicked off," but I made it somehow. I left her at the front gate, and boy, I left, not even saying, "Good night." Two weeks later I asked this same girl for a date, and from then on I've made progress along that line.

Henry

My parents don't know many families where there are girls, so I have to pick my own. This is not hard for me any more, because I am not as bashful as I used to be. When I was in the lower grades I had "crushes" on several girls, but only one was violent. After being "thrown down," I became very cold and disinterested in girls for a time. Then we moved into a girl-infested neighborhood and I began to get acquainted more easily. I began to lose some of my bashfulness. Anyway, it was not until my high school days that I began to take a real interest in women. All the girls I know come from church, classrooms, and the like, where nobody needs introductions.

If association with girls is the cure for bashfulness then it would seem as though it could be effected more easily at an earlier age. The reaction of some boys to any new situation is a tendency to withdraw. They become overconscious of themselves. When they feel strange and out of place, they are apt to let it get the better of them. On the other hand, many boys crave new experience and thus make friendships very easily.

Just the chain of circumstances by which a certain boy meets any particular girl is a problem which has not attracted much attention. The element of "chance" seems to play a more important part in the situation than is ordinarily supposed. They

seem to be in many cases just "thrown together" as if by accident. "I had an umbrella and she did not;" they were in "the same Latin class;" "Some people moved right next door;" or "She was a sister of one of the boys in my crowd."

Henry

No doubt you are interested in how my catastrophe came about. Well, one year ago, I was a sophomore and she was a freshman. I started to take first year Latin, so we were "hurled" into the same class. When I first saw her she seemed to be too bright for me, so I paid little attention. Finally, because she was sitting next to me when she got stuck in a recitation, she winked across the aisle for help. I knew "my stuff" that day, so I "pulled her out of the hole." From then on we began to be quite "thick."

Richard

On the beach party we needed the help of several girls, so we chose two who were chums. Naturally we became quite well acquainted. Milton liked one of them quite well, and I seemed to have a peculiar feeling toward the other. This was the "germ" of our first date.

John

I am not "girl crazy" and I don't go with them regularly, but I like them, and I like them "pretty but good." I don't think I would like an evening with a "shady" one, but I never tried. I have a girl friend up state with whom I correspond regularly. I met her and was with her only one day, and I have not seen her since. I was with my father on a business trip, and her father was the manager of the store where we took inventory that day.

Often these first pairing-off occasions are a by-product of normal contacts at church, school or neighborhood. The small town is apt to offer more opportunities of this kind than the larger city, because of the neighborly spirit which prevails. Everybody feels acquainted with everybody else.

Martin

When I was fifteen years old some people moved into the house next to us. There was one girl who was in my class at school. I began, as soon as first I saw her, to admire her. No one knew it except myself. One night there was a class party, and I wanted to take her, but something held me back. Finally, she asked me if she might go with me.

Verne

I went to visit my grandparents for a two weeks' vacation. While I was there, I was talking to some fellows on the corner, when a girl passed and they all said, "Hello." They told me her name was Belle and added that she wanted to meet me. That night at the band concert it was all arranged. She was real nice, so we went for a walk. During this time I was friendly with a girl named Maude, and the next day she bawled me out for quitting her. When I got home I wrote to both of them and they wrote to me until Maude quit. The next thing I knew she was married to an army officer. The following year I went up to see Belle. It cost quite a lot, but I loved her and I wanted to see her.

Charles

As I said before, I'm slow to get acquainted with, and sometimes I have a hard time of it. But I've lived in this burg all my life and about everybody knows me. I know

every girl here—fast, medium, slow, square, straight, and crooked. As far as I can remember, I've never had to be introduced to a girl in my life.

The spirit of the hunt or the chase is found in many love affairs. In cases of this kind the boys look upon the girl as "a prize" and their experience as a "quest."

Charles

Do I flirt? Um, boy! And do I "get set"? Well, I should say. Do I care? Not a bit. But I don't flirt much. Lately, I've got so that I wink at every pretty girl that passes the bunch when we are talking on the street corner.

Fred

Then I began high school and this passion for girls grew stronger and stronger. I began to approach girls in a different manner, however. That is I began to develop a scheme, or a way to flirt. First, I would look at a girl and smile sharply. Then I would calm the expression on my face, and smile again. After this, if any reaction was not given by the girl, I would give a sort of sad but staring look. And then again, I would end the expression with the eyes looking downward. Finally, I would bring my face forward with a small smile, or almost laugh. This scheme seemed to work when I tried it.

Unfortunately, the love affairs of adolescence have always been turned into a target for ridicule. The newspapers, movies and magazines all run to jokes centering around the attraction, even at this early, undeveloped period of one sex for the other. While there are many comic elements in these immature

love affairs, it is important to remember that young folks are apt to take them most seriously.

Variation in Attitudes toward Girls

Not all the boys in the group under study had extensive experiences with girls, and this in spite of the fact that they were well along in sexual maturity. Several of them did not go out with girls at all, nor did they seem to be drawn toward the opposite sex.

Leonard

Girls are a very dull subject for a boy who knows as little as I do about them. I have three sisters, but that's all I know about girls. I like to dance with them and take them home from parties, but I've never been in love.

Leonard is the youngest boy in the entire group, too young to be personally interested in girls. The situation which Adolph finds himself in is a problem of social adjustment.

Adolph

I liked girls but was too self-conscious and not self-confident enough to go very far with them. As a natural result, I admired them secretly and envied the boys who could get along with them. The trouble was that we lived on a quiet street where there were few girls anywhere near my age, and then, too, I was bashful.

My brother was not interested in girls, either. He spent most of his time fooling around in the back room with electricity, and later radio. Furthermore, I was never furnished with much money, always having to ask for small sums. Finally, any references to the subject

at home usually brought ridicule, good natured though it was.

Adolph as he became older made a variety of attempts to adjust himself to girls, but without great success, even as late as his freshman year in college.

Adolph

If I was a Fatalist, I would believe that I am fated not to have any chance for acquaintance with the cheer-bringing sex. The church here is small, there are few girls in it and none of them require smoked glasses when being observed. However, I am doing my best. I am going to learn to dance. Maybe that will help.

It is not unusual for adolescent boys to satisfy their love-life by going to moving pictures, and burlesque shows. Very frequently, these individuals, who do not have intimate girl companions, will say they like the love scenes in the movie. They seem to identify themselves with the lover, and in their imaginations undergo the same emotional experience as the hero on the screen.

Harry

When I was younger I always came home from the movies with the same idea, "Oh, if they only wouldn't make love and kiss, I could enjoy the show." Now it seems just the opposite.

Alfred

If my folks had lived in a decent neighborhood, in the suburbs, where I could have known some American boys and girls, and perhaps, had a girl friend, I would not have gone to the burlesque shows as often as I did. But

all this was in me. I was bubbling over with it. I could not hold myself in restraint.

My desire to join the navy was due partly to my circumstances at home, and partly to this uncontrollable imagination of mine. In the case of the navy, I wanted to go to Annapolis or work my way up from the ranks some day, as a "Master of Men." Playing the piano, I always imagined that it was a military march. I pictured myself as leading the cavalry, and where the piece got soft, I imagined that I, the captain and hero, was returning home, and that Lela (she was a girl at church) had approved of my valiant chivalry. Her father had consented to our marriage. And then, toward the end of the piece, or the chimes, I pictured us in a big mansion, Southern style, and my son, a Cadet at West Point, home on his vacation. Later, when I met Beth, a far prettier girl, she took the place of Lela. When I got the idea of being a mining engineer, I thought I had to have a Spanish girl, so I created one of my own in imagination. The only sweethearts I have ever had have been in my imagination.

Love and Its Objects

Henry Drummond's statement that "Love is the greatest thing in the world" takes no account of the wide differences between the various types of devotion. Love means nothing apart from its object. It must be thought of with a baby for its object in the case of a mother's love, a wife in the case of a husband, or, during courtship, a sweetheart. Love acts differently in each of these relations. Furthermore, the love shown by a father for his baby son is not identical with the mother's love for the same baby, and certainly not the same as the father's love for the child's mother. Con-

sequently, love during courtship, denotes an attraction between two individuals of the opposite sex kept alive by a growing appreciation that this girl has the qualities her suitor wants his life-mate to have. It is accompanied by a growing wish to monopolize her company.

Sigmund Freud in his works on psychoanalysis has used the terms, "love" and "sex," or libido, as synonyms. Any concept purporting to be all-inclusive in this fashion is useless for purposes of analysis. To assume that the sum total of relationships between boys and girls at the age of seven, or twelve, or eighteen are sexual in nature is to take an extreme position which cannot be sustained. Wide varieties of attitude and conduct can be dissected from the documents which form inserts in this chapter. The rough outline which follows represents a crude attempt to classify some of the more common of these various heterosexual experiences.

I. *Acquaintanceship.* Casual meeting and conversation with the person sitting next to you in class, at church, or on meeting at a store.
II. *Some Interest in Common.* Radio, dancing, plans to enter college, or work on the school paper, etc.
III. *Just Mere Sociability or Gregariousness.* A craving for companionship, and in this case it happens to be with girls, rather than with boys.
IV. *Social Pressures.* Group practice decrees that it is the thing to do. Other boys see a girl home, take a girl to a dance, have "a steady," etc.
V. *Comradeship.* An intimate friendship in which sex plays a minor rôle.

VI. *Big Brother Attitude.* Paternal and protective. Attitudes of chivalry pronounced.

VII. *Increasing Inquisitiveness in Regard to the Opposite Sex.* This inquisitiveness feeds on its own imaginings, on pictures, stories, gossip about girls and information both good and bad. It stops short of physical expression.

VIII. *Physical Gratification of Sex Desires.* Fondling, "petting," or the sex act with little or no thought of marriage.

IX. *Marital Relations.* Marriage attitudes and practices, which include various combinations of the other points.

Much of the confusion which exists in girl and boy relationships at present results from young people's mixing these degrees of familiarity indiscriminately. Some high school boys spoil their companionship with girls by indulgence in the practices of courtship, and others carry familiarity in their courtship over the border into the marital.

Certain of the boys retrace the various stages embraced in the history of their dealings with the whole question of girls through (1) First contacts, (2) Daydreaming, (3) Conversations and correspondence, (4) Activities in common, (5) Social pressures, and (6) Contest with a rival.

1. First Contacts

The more common ways in which boys meet and get acquainted with girls have already been discussed. Very often the acquaintanceship stops at this point. The friendship never becomes serious. It does not develop into a courtship. A rising inter-

est due to a growing inquisitiveness in regard to the opposite sex leads to the introduction of other factors. Daydreaming and pairing off spur them into such relationships as going to parties, dances, or holding hands and kissing. The boy longs to be with her. He now calls her "his steady." Increasingly, during this process, the liking to fondle and its accompanying emotions extend their scope.

Harry

To touch a girl, to dance with her, to have one take my arm, to say good-night, are just about the things that are most wonderful to me. If I am talking to a girl at a dance, and I touch her hand, or happen to lean against her when I am sitting by her, I am moved and excited, although I don't mean uncontrolled. You may think this sounds silly. It does, but it is the truth.

Ralph

I never thought of women until I saw "her." Then, well, now I think of her always. She said that she wanted to let me kiss her, but I scared her for the moment, because she didn't dream that I would try it. She was sorry anyone else had ever kissed her. She told me that "Stein" had kissed her twice, two years after she had known him. No wonder I scared her. I had only known her two weeks.

Clarence

If you remember correctly, when I first met you, I didn't care a rap about girls. In fact, I thought them simple. But during this last half year, I have mingled more and more with the girls than ever before. Slowly and surely I got "girl-crazy." The bunch have their parties, and consequently, I fall in line.

After a long search for a girl, I found her by accident. It was the day before the Junior Prom. I went down to where I used to work in the summer. The manager asked me if I wouldn't like to see some of the old friends. Of course, I didn't say "No." While I was talking with one of the fellows, I happened to spy a nice looking girl folding letters, so I asked my friend to introduce me. In time I told her of the Junior Prom and she said she would help me out.

Richard

Then one night I met Doris. What a "knockout" she was. I couldn't believe it was the same girl I wouldn't dance with a few months before. That night I kissed her. As I think of it now tears come to my eyes. I loved her then, and I still love her. Soon after a friend of mine gave her "the devil" for letting me kiss her. Well, he liked her a lot himself you see. For two and a half months this summer, I did not see or even write to her. Then she went to the hospital for an operation and I couldn't stay away. She welcomed me, but coolly.

Henry

My pals say that among other things, one of the hardest jobs is "to keep their hands off." For that matter, it is hard for anybody, not only because of "the kick" you get out of it, but the fact that many of the girls don't object very much. I don't believe a certain amount does any harm, when it is not looked on as a means for spending the whole evening. What I am trying to get over is that there is a lot of difference in finishing the evening with a kiss, and starting the evening with one.

2. Daydreaming

The minds of boys who have begun to take an interest in girls conjure up many vivid mental pic-

tures. Step by step, the party to which they are going to take a girl is thus visualized. After each new episode in the courtship, solitary and lonesome, they run through in their imaginations its whole history again. This phase of the experience is very real to the boy who is in love. Boys who do not possess so vivid an imagination, do not fall victims to as intensely emotional experiences as those commonly referred to in conversation by them as "crushes." Sometimes a boy will have a "dream girl" and go in quest of her. Much more frequently, the girl with whom a boy is infatuated is turned into a "dream girl" whom no one else is able to recognize.

Ralph

As a senior in high school I had a dream that affected me for a week, so I could not study. I dreamed that a real-pal-of-a-girl and I had a wonderful time in a wood —a good wholesome time—and that we were married there in a woodland church. How happy we were—a different kind of happiness than I had ever experienced before.

The fellows laughed and kidded me when I told them but it was no joke to me. I started to look for that girl. Every chance I got to speak to a girl, I did, because I was honestly searching for that girl, but I was disappointed every time.

The next summer in camp I walked up to headquarters and there I met the girl of my dreams. Why, I had gone to high school with her. I had forgotten all about the dream, but as soon as I saw her, it came back to my mind. I offered to take her for a canoe ride and she accepted. Though we spoke very little, I sure hated to come back to camp. It was heaven, pure and simple.

When I lead singing in camp, I sing for her. When I teach swimming, I see her face before me.

Henry

Among these different girls, there was one who bore a resemblance to the "Amazon of my fantasies." She was too popular for a slow lad like me, so I placed her on my forgotten list. I was more attracted to Ellen, then. As track season came along, I entered our first indoor meet, and noticed Ellen in the audience. The next day I awoke to find myself a victim of Cupid—I loved Ellen. During my classes, her face was in my mind, and I was thrilled during the athletic meet to have her watch my prowess.

Charles

We sure didn't go with each other for serious reasons, for I don't think that I would have suited the young lady as that kind of a prospect. I have never talked of love or marriage to a girl. In fact, I hardly ever think about it. Then, when I do, I get scared stiff and try to quit the women.

3. Communication

The endless conversations which take place between a pair of young folks who "fall in love" with each other, and the smiles, winks, the meaning glances, notes and letters which pass back and forth between them constitute a veritable springtime as respects growth of personality.

Henry

Through the short hours that Ellen saw me, that hour when she was in trouble, when she was unhappy, when she was seemingly double-tricked, when she needed a friend—in that hour I tried to be her helper. First, I

tried to make her believe that I was clean. I told her, in small notes, that my parents were very easy with me, but I wanted to be good. I wanted to go straight and keep away from bad habits. She said that it was the first good sense she had heard from a boy, and that her parents were hard on her, and that she, too, wanted to go straight.

Walter

Not only did she talk about other boys, but she did not talk in a clean, straight-forward way as I expected. All her remarks were suggestive of something shady. All her jokes had two meanings.

Ralph

Fourth of July is the day we met. She said it will always be a sacred day to her, and it sure will to me. We discussed everything. The next day I got a letter from her. She had wanted to write and ended the letter with "till the next time." How happy I was. The Camp Director would let me send a fellow to town at special times to see if there was any mail from her.

4. Activities in Common

Boy and girl chums love to go hiking, canoeing, play tennis, attend shows, and whatever else they can find to do by themselves. Even in the group activities in which they participate, they snatch at opportunities to pair off. The desirability of cultivating the dance, as a major activity among young people, has been recognized by many churches and social agencies in their program, because of the curb it puts upon too great familiarity in their intimacies.

Harry

Naturally enough I received some attention from the girls but I sure was "green" at the beginning. We used to take long walks alone many evenings that spring and end up at the old mill.

Ralph

She said it was like heaven at the lake, when I was teaching her to swim. I'd have been struck dumb if I'd have tried to tell her how I felt when I carried her in the water. One night we went to the dam out in the country where there was a dance hall and boating. We went canoeing. Boy, it was swell under the stars and the moon that night! We spoke very little of love though we did mention how strange it was that we were together.

Another time we went through a big woods where there were no trails. It was pitch dark and neither of us knew the way. We were lost, so to speak, but we didn't care. I would have been frightened alone. She took my hand for assurance, not to hold hands. We went down a steep ravine and she slid. I caught her in my arms, with the moon full on her face. I wanted to kiss her, and I had to force myself not to, because I was afraid I'd lose some of her trust and respect.

5. Social Pressures

The gossip and remarks of onlookers regarding a young couple are quite as responsible for "the match" as the inclinations of the couple themselves. Jests and comments exercise the same influence in matchmaking as they do in a fist fight between two boys. This outside interference, especially among the relatives and in small towns, becomes a determining factor in many love affairs. "Town

talk" often has a couple engaged or married before the parties concerned have done anything about it themselves. Not infrequently in high school circles, this begins as soon as a boy takes a certain girl to a party for the first time. The group expects him to take this same girl to the next party and he may feel this pressure strongly. This sort of gossip also breaks up many promising friendships.

Henry

The fellows I went with thought Ellen was "a pill." They dug up all kinds of complaints about her. When I fell in love first, I tried to break the news to the fellows, but they lacked interest. Because of this, I kept it more or less of a secret.

Ralph

After the canoe ride, we walked through a near-by woods, with a bunch of the kids from camp following. Oh, it was new and wonderful for me to walk through the woods with a girl, and I know she enjoyed it, too. The kids made bright remarks and I told them they were a "thorn in the flesh," but they only laughed. I didn't have the heart to beat them or even bawl them out without cracking a smile. When they suggested things like, "Why don't you sit under this tree?" "Are you bashful?" or "Have you got a sore arm?" then I ran them back to camp and threatened not to let them go swimming.

Finally, they had to go home. She waved at me as their auto pulled away from camp. Needless to say, they "razzed me" that night and ever since. But for me, I liked it. In the camp paper they said, "So Ralph took her out and paddled her back." Nearly every issue of

the paper had something about how much mail I was getting, or how often I pressed my pants.

I let her wear my Hi-Y pin and the girls told her all sorts of things about girls wearing a fellow's club pin. They gave her the impression that there was something indecent about it, and she was all "up in the air." "Damn those women," I thought. "Why do they have to tell things they don't know." I meant it as a token of close friendship and told her so.

6. Contest with a Rival

Since the beginning of time, the lover has had to win out in competition with one or more admirers of the chosen one. Occasionally, a boy has a girl all to himself from the beginning, but most girls are more in demand. Sometimes it is the boy who has several girls "on the string." The tests to which character is subjected by this new-found sense of possession, and its accompanying conflicts and jealousies, inspired by an intensified desire to secure a certain girl, frequently prove too great a strain for people much older to meet successfully.

Walter

While I was away in the summer she had been going with another boy and I didn't like it. She told me she wanted to find out whom she liked the better. She thinks she likes me, so she says, and I am fool enough to believe her. I think, however, if she wants me to be her sweetheart, I should have all the dates while at home. I told her I would drop her, if she went out with him while I am home.

Donald

Just recently I have been in line with a very good sort

of girl, but now she has deserted me and is going with another fellow. So I am sort of heartbroken or down and out. I suppose it is all foolishness.

Charles

I get sore when I see her out with another boy. I remember once when I was having a great time over a girl that another boy wanted. When I found it out, "Um, Boy." One evening I found this fellow in his auto going down toward the girl's house. I gets in our "old buggy" and drives down there right behind him. He runs up in the driveway and I stay out in front. He goes in the house and I stay outside. As soon as he gets in, I honked my horn, and the young lady came out. I asked her for a date "right under that baby's nose," and away we went. He was going to lick me for two months after, but he never did it.

The following experiences of Ralph are characteristic of certain high school boys, who fall in love with one girl and then another, and before they are aware of the significance of what is in the wind, they may be engaged.

Ralph

I have tried going with other girls, but I feel like "a piker." I hate to go with another girl and let Mary expect me to be thinking of her, when I'm out with another. At one party, I met some dandy girls and got some phone numbers, but I have not called them up.

Less than three months later, the letters from Ralph took on a different tone.

Ralph

Christmas day I fell in love with another girl. I found

out that she loves me, more than just as a friend. I've promised to write her. That same evening, I was invited to another party. I went there after leaving Mary. Here I met Jean. The next Sunday I was over to see Jean again. While there I telephoned Mary, and she seemed so anxious to see me that I broke away to go over there.

Since then I've really fallen in love with a girl named Wilma. Last summer in camp I'd have sworn that there never could be a girl like Mary. Then, last week, I thought it was Jean, but now I know it is Wilma. Boy, she's some kid. I've got it worse than I had it last summer.

Finally, in less than a year after meeting Mary, he writes:

I've changed my mind about a lot of things recently. I used to think that a fellow could love only one girl. "That's all wet." I still love Mary, but now I love a new girl named Mildred. For three Sundays I haven't been to bed before 2:30 A.M. She lives too far away for me to see her other nights, so she comes to see me, and then stays with her aunt. She wants me to go with her steady and I sure want to.

The climax came only a few weeks later:

How will I pick the right one? I already have. Mildred and I, so they all believe, will be married. A lot of people think it will be soon after graduation, but she'll not even get a diamond until her birthday. I don't believe in working too fast.

The Influence of Boys' Work

The church has had the best opportunities to guide boys and girls in these new experiences. Too

often, however, church workers have been content to play the censor in sweeping fashion and consider their function fully performed. On the other hand, until recent years, the Y. M. C. A. has not tried to deal with this problem in any adequate manner. Indeed, its very programs of activity operate as a substitute for or hindrance to girl relationships.

I like to play basketball, to hear the nets swish and I spend all my extra time with the game. I spend very little time with girls. I like them all right but my activities keep me so busy I can't find time for them. I suppose I must be a crank on basketball, Scouting and Hi-Y work.[2]

John

I wish you could give me a few pointers on how to get the fellows thinking against dancing at a Hi-Y party. Do they do it in other cities? I dance and rather enjoy it, but I can't see why we should dance every time.

While the Y. M. C. A. has not fostered joint activities for boys and girls to any great extent, its workers have tried to induce them to discuss and interpret problems growing out of the relationship of the sexes, and thus to establish certain standards of behavior for themselves. In some cases this has not been done wisely, and some psychologists consider that the after effects of these open discussions do not prove helpful.

Fred

The speaker described the life of a girl he knew. He

[2] Document No. 18.

brought the picture so close to us that the boys were stunned. Everybody was as quiet as a mouse. The point was brought out that dirty speech leads to an unclean mind, and an unclean mind leads to nothing else but destruction of body and soul. Then he took us to the hospital where the girl was diseased. His last point was the hardest to bring out. He got down to "brass tacks" and said that unless boys and girls could say "No," they are headed for ruin.

Some speakers to high school boys have learned that they can produce pronounced emotional and psychic effects by references to the sex problem in their talks. Those who are concerned with the best development of personality in these young men are convinced that this is a very harmful practice, good as the intentions of these speakers may be.

In many Hi-Y programs provision is made for free group discussion of the everyday situations and practices of girls and boys. The weakness of this method, thus far, has been its failure to supply these young people with ways and means for meeting the difficult problems exposed in the course of the discussions.

Verne

As we looked over our school, we knew that there was a lot of bootlegging going on, and the girl and boy relations were terrible. We decided to have a boy and girl relationship campaign. In carrying on this campaign, we first had a talk on sexual problems by a physician. Now we are having discussions on this. I suggested the problem, "Is spooning harmful?" In the discussions, the boys were very frank. I'm sure fifty per cent of the fellows

in our Club have gone on "necking parties" at some time or other. They don't mean any harm, but forget themselves and have a little fun. We are going to have a discussion next week on dancing.

Just what good or harm comes from open group discussions or speaking campaigns on personal problems of this nature is difficult to determine. With the very opposite intention on the part of the promoters, they may set in motion excess amounts of attention and conversation about problems and practices to which many of the boys in the group are either strangers or of which they are comparatively little aware. The Character Tests, whose object was to discover what changes of attitude were effected by such discussions, assume that the boys will give honest and fearless answers which will not be biased by what they think adult group opinion will expect of them, and that the reactions of all boys to each situation will be alike. Since this obviously is to expect far more than is warranted by the facts from the boys, other ways and means must be devised before the results of such discussions and community campaigns can be more correctly appraised.

The practice is quite common among adult workers connected with social and religious institutions to take advantage of problems as they arise for personal conferences with older boys and young men who are perplexed, in actual difficulty, or merely curious over relations with the other sex. Many young people will talk freely with a sympathetic adult on topics they might hesitate to discuss

with their fathers in the same free open way. Furthermore, the fact that each boy's sex problems seem based on experiences peculiar to him, seems to warrant the conclusion that this individual approach should be the most fruitful.

The possibilities for shabby behavior in girl and boy relations have been greatly increased in our day and generation by the automobile, changed styles in dress, the modern dance, jazz music, the new freedom, and the misbehavior of certain adult acquaintances. The increased amount of talk upon the subject of sex, while sure to be beneficial in the long run, helps to create the impression in the mind of the high school boy that sex is universal in its scope. Those adults whose main reaction to this complicated situation is one of negative criticism do not make the task of finding solutions which will work any easier. In contrast, certain of the older boys themselves set very good examples of sane attitudes, which may prove to be the best approach to a really constructive program. Even so the grave danger remains of falling into an overemphasis on the abnormal and intimate aspects of the sex phase of the problem.

The spirit of knighthood on the part of the male, which has been the governing ideal in determining the relationship of the sexes for so many centuries is growing rapidly defunct. No longer do women care to have men assume the superior status implicit in the rôle of guardians over frail, helpless ladies. Women demand they be treated as equals. This makes necessary a provision that the supreme worth of personality should be respected by both parties.

Young men and women have not yet adjusted themselves fully to this new status of the sexes, and until they do, the doors will be left wide open for a lot of social mischief.

PART III
SIGNIFICANT LIFE SITUATIONS

CHAPTER V

THE ROLE OF ATHLETICS

Of all the activities and interests which appeal to high school boys, athletics ranks first in popularity. Indeed, it seems sometimes as though this interest in athletics has become so engrossing that the educational functions of the school have been relegated to a secondary position. For even those who do not possess any degree of skill in the games themselves become "fans" and "rooters." A larger percentage of the boys turn first to the sporting pages of the newspaper and follow the careers of the big "stars" in all sports far more closely than they do their lessons. The most talked about athlete of the season in college and professional sports is the hero of the boys.

Martin

As a catcher I used to think nobody had anything on Ray Schalk of the Chicago White Sox. I read all I could about him and his methods of playing the game. Then "Red" Grange of the University of Illinois was the popular hero in football for the high school boys, I think. The only thoughts I had of him was wondering how it must feel to be so popular.

The time when athletic games were played primarily for sheer fun and body-building, seems to

have given way to an era of competitive sports with the highest distinction awarded to "star" players. High standing as an athlete is coveted by more boys in high school than any other honor. As one of the boys says:

Even though I had dropped out of school, I was very much interested in athletics. My ambition was to return to school to "make a team." I was an ardent rooter and helped to win many games from the sideline. I wanted to "make my letter" in high school. I spoke of my desire to return to school to my parents. Mother favored it but dad said he would rather have me work in the mill.[1]

The motive signified in the phrase, "to make a letter," adds materially to the shaping power exerted by athletics over personality.

Harry

I think my place of leadership in the "Y" was due to my ability on the apparatus. My ability at basketball brought me the captaincy one year at the Church club, and another year at the "Y." I believe my success at leadership in the Gym brought me my camp leadership. The football managership came because the Coach thought I liked to help in that sport. Then, the senior class presidency came because of my ability in studies, as well as sports.

Degree of Skill in Athletics

Some boys have little or no ability as athletes. Ray, for instance, who was not in the best of health during adolescence, was forced to refrain from all strenuous forms of activity. Although Alfred went

[1] Document No. 13.

to the Y. M. C. A. and to camp, he finally was drawn off into other activities, because he was not an athlete. Charles never mentioned in much detail the subject of athletics in his correspondence. Unfortunately, disinclination to talk or write about what boy public opinion esteems a great weakness, failure, or inferiority, is characteristic of the high school non-athlete. This explains a certain brevity without much of an attempt at an alibi in the following materials:

Alfred

I am not naturally athletic. I have tried at different times, but, after being ridiculed, mostly for my shape, and perhaps even by self-consciousness, I gradually dropped out. I got along quite well in the athletic line at camp, especially in swimming. Some of my relations have said, "Why don't you play football, etc.? You'll never be popular until you do." I have tried at different times, but I am not an athlete.

Verne

I haven't cared much for athletics. Football was my favorite sport, although I did not actually play much. When we changed coaches, I thought I wouldn't go so big on the team, so I tried out for manager of the team. I held the office for two years. I knew how to get the supplies and to handle the "dirty work," so I was reappointed.

These boys are out of luck in the degree that social status among their fellows is based on physical prowess. Some of these non-athletes lose heart over their plight, others turn to and become enthusiastic spectators, seek alternative recognition as Team

Managers or Cheer Leaders, or are drawn off into outside activities, such as music, dramatics, or debate. John, who was an outstanding leader in high school along other lines, frankly says:

John

The great thing that keeps me out of athletics is that I don't weigh enough. I would rather watch a football game than anything, but I prefer to play tennis or golf. I like to swim, and I swim a great deal. Being an officer in my class at school, and a Major of the R. O. T. C. keeps me rather busy. Besides, athletics would keep me from the Hi-Y and two other school clubs that interest me greatly.

Every Friday night a group of us boys have a club, or we go to town and have a good time. When we go out like this, we never have dates. We all go in a body. There is one thing I think is wrong with athletics and that is all the boys on the teams hang around together. They do not try to get acquainted with other fellows in the school.

In cases like the one below, the psychic conflict over repeated failures in athletics becomes so serious that it tends to disorganize a boy's whole personality:

While in my junior year, I became interested in athletics. I tried to practice with the teams and observe the form of the way they ran or jumped. I tried hard to be an athlete, but I never could make it. Finally, it got so the fellows made fun of me. They called me a "would-be" and other names. Once I entered the half mile and ran third. I tried again and again at school meets or at the "Y," but I never got better than third. I always resented it within my soul when they made fun

of me but still I tried. I went out for football but was always a scrub. Often I thought the coach did not give me a chance. He put me at every position on the team, but I never played a game.[2]

When their athletic ambitions are thwarted or blocked, a few high school boys have learned how to turn it off as a jest by making fun of their form, or talking facetiously about how they "used to be" football players before they broke a leg. Others beat a retreat to some very different activity in which they can excel, such as art or music. This is known as a solution by "substitution." Many boys spend a lot of time daydreaming or imagining themselves becoming champions. Still others locate the difficulty elsewhere, as we see in Document No. 21 above, or accept the excuses which they offer to themselves for their failure. Finally, more boys than we realize become exceedingly discouraged over their failures as athletes and give up in despair.

Six of the boys in this study distinguish themselves as players in some form of high school athletics. They achieve what may be called success in the eyes of scores of their fellow high school boys and girls. Two major factors seem to interact in promoting a boy's success in athletics. First, an opportunity to play, which usually comes easier to a boy from an influential family, and, second, a good physique and some latent athletic ability.

1. The Influence of the Social Setting

How much interest a boy takes in athletics will

[2] Document No. 21.

depend greatly on such factors as how his parents and brothers feel about it, and how much his ambition for social prestige feeds on the newspaper reports of the games as is brought out by the following documents:

Walter

I first became interested in athletics, when I was about twelve years of age. The truth is, I was living in a country town until then. While my two older brothers were playing football, I was milking cows. Now since they have graduated, I have been more active in sports. My parents were against my going out for football, although I know they feel proud, way down in their hearts, when I play a good game. But I had two older brothers' records to beat. I did it to a certain extent in football, but I failed in basketball.

Martin

When I started to high school, I can recall the time the coach called to me and gave me a suit saying, "Come on out tonight." If I had had time to answer, I would have said I didn't know anything about the game. I'm glad I didn't get the time to answer. I tried hard to earn a letter the first year in athletics.

In the surrounding towns my brother made a reputation as a basketball player. Whenever I talked with the older teams, they always mentioned my brother. They expected the same of me in my freshman year, I guess, from their talk. Well, it didn't come as soon as that, but nearly as good later.

Richard

Boxing with my brother before I was ten years old taught me several lessons. He would send me sprawling and when I would come back, he would send me down

flat on the floor again. This taught me to be cautious. A little later I became more skillful. Even though I was small for my age I began to take delight in scrapping. Some of my aggressive nature I can blame on my early training. Soon after my early experiences I began to play soccer, basketball and baseball, but always in a fighting spirit.

2. Skill and Interests

No boy becomes a great athlete without the requisite physical qualifications. The tall slender boy tries out for basketball, one with long legs the hurdles, and the short stocky boy goes out for football. The question arises, even so, as to how much of a factor a socially aroused interest may be in athletic success.

Fred

While a youngster, my highest ambition was to become a great baseball player. I was considered very good among my own gang, as well as by the men of my home town. In fact, these men predicted a great baseball future for me. Many a Sunday, instead of going to Sunday school, I would meet with the gang over in the fields.

As time went on, I was selected to play on the town team. The first game I participated in was on the Fourth of July. I remember, as if only yesterday, how "puffed up" I was in my uniform. Gee! but did I strut. During practice I handled all the balls with perfect ease and made a very good showing.

Soon the game was called. Things began to run through my mind. What would I do if they knocked the ball to me? I became frightened, afraid I would make some mistake and ruin my reputation. I was hoping the ball

would not be knocked to me. The first ball went to the second baseman, so I relaxed a bit. I tried to come to my senses. I tried to figure out what I would do if the ball did come. Boy! Here comes the ball. Before I knew what I was doing, I fumbled it awkwardly and the man was safe. A pang of disappointment struck me. I wished I had never seen a ball. I was getting "the razz" from the stands.

On the point of how many boys make excuses where another boy makes headway under great handicaps, Fred has this to say:

Many boys say, "I haven't got the weight or the height or the ability." Some say they have to work, and others think they cannot waste time on athletics. I know a boy who did not have weight or strength, but who was ambitious. Some of the fellows laughed at him. Well, he played with the team, but did not play enough to get his letter. I am sure he will get one next season. My idea is "Get out and try."

Richard

To this day not one person around school will scrap with me, due to my record of being the hardest hitter and the trickiest boxer in my class. My peak of physical superiority came when I was a senior. One of the fellows called me a name, and I proceeded to crack him on the nose.

Some athletes of all-round ability go from sport to sport as the seasons change.

Harry

At the "Y," when I joined at twelve, my eye and fancy was immediately taken by the Leaders' Corps.

After six months I was voted in. My ability on the parallels was enough to hold the interest of the boys. At about fourteen, I began to be proficient in other things as well. I learned basketball well enough to be captain of the church team. Then we formed a swimming team. There were but two fellows who could beat me in speed. The coach asked me if I would try the breast stroke. I did and this resulted in my swimming on the team for three years, and in high school for two years. In my sophomore year I made the basketball squad, as a "sub." Last year I played with the regulars.

Martin

From the very start baseball fascinated me and I took to catching. My main reason for catching was because no one else liked what was considered a hard job. This resulted in my love of it, because it made me popular. If the game is hard and calls for skill, it seems to dare one to try and master it.

Clarence is an example of the boy who goes in for the individualistic type of activity rather than for team games.

Clarence

Although I liked wrestling very much, later I took up swimming, simply because I didn't know how. In wrestling I won the third place championship for the 125 pound class. I like it because two could engage in it, thus avoiding the trouble of getting up a team. Another reason was that you could attack your opponent with the full force of your muscular power, and you aren't interrupted by special rules. Finally when your man is down there isn't any question about it, for you can hold him there for fifteen minutes or more, if the conditions are favorable.

3. Playing the Rôle of the "Star"

Every boy encounters many kinds of shaping influences in his struggles to "be somebody" in class, at a party, and on the field. Fred speaks of it as "winning a reputation." How it feels to succeed and how it alters one's group standing is described in the following documents.

Fred

Gee, I got a "kick" out of running up and down the field knowing that I was winning a reputation, for I played on the first squad. Again I went into my other activities because I wanted to do better than the year before in everything.

Martin

I'll say I had a stronger stand-in with my girl and the boss. I shall never forget one experience. One Saturday as I was going to the ball grounds, my girl friend said to me as I passed her house, "I hope you make a home run to-day, Martin." I smiled, had a funny sensation, and probably my heart missed a few beats. I answered: "Thank you, I'll try."

Richard

A thing that has helped me in athletics is thinking of the big I—in other words, self-confidence. My chums were of different kinds, some athletes, some "go-between," and a few intellectuals. I was better physically and mentally because of athletics. Athletics improves my scholarship.

Walter

For me athletics gave me honor. I looked at my fellows and thought of them as before. But if one is a good athlete, he has lots of friends. School spirit is lacking in

our town, because everybody loves a winner, and we are not that.

Through success as athletes, older boys become heroes and wield a certain power among their companions and in their groups. Oddly enough, not one of the boys quoted makes mention of the peculiar opportunities afforded by this prestige to be of special service in the life of the school. As Richard says, "I go to school for an education, but three-sevenths of that schooling is in athletics and four-sevenths in the books."

Some Harmful Effects of Competitive Play

There is another side to athletics as now carried on in the average high school, which needs to be presented to fill out the picture despite the fact that some of its sponsors are possessed with an almost religious enthusiasm which resents any and all criticism.

My own experience with these beautiful young athletes is that, as human beings, they are curiously useless and uninteresting. One might almost say that, in general, the more successful they are as athletes, the greater failures they are as human beings. They are like cats, who make up for prodigious agility of the chase by prolonged periods of utter laziness. When not training, my young athlete is one of the laziest mortals, and only under compulsion will he lift a hand for helpful service. He has become the victim of one idea. He thinks of one thing, talks about one thing, dreams about one thing. An honest sociologist would have to class him with the temporary insane. In a word, the thoroughgoing athlete is socially a bore, and not only to older people, but also to those plain-spoken youngsters of his own age, who by

some happy accident have declined to substitute a tiny leather ball for the great round earth.[3]

The next extract from an autobiographical novel is written by a boy of seventeen in an English preparatory school.

For, after all, is it any wonder that clear-thinking men like Benson pull our system to pieces, when we have to own that for the last twenty years at least the only thing public school boys have cared about is games? And with such a belief they go out into life, to find the important posts seized by middle-class men who have really worked. No one works at a public school. People who do are despised. If they happen to be good at games as well, they are tolerated. It is a condemnation of the whole system. And, after all, what are games? Merely a form of exercise. We have to keep our bodies healthy, because, as Mr. Rudd so wisely puts it, a healthy mind means a healthy body. Games were invented because people wanted to enjoy their exercise. We all enjoy games. I love cricket; but that does not make me worship it. We can like a thing without bowing down to it, and that's how we have got to treat teams. Some fool said, "The battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton," and a fool he was, too. Games don't win battles, but brains do, and brains aren't trained on the footer field. It is time to realize that; and I think from the way the speaking has gone to-night, the school is beginning to understand. . . .

Gordon's speech really made an impression. After all, he was a blood, one of the best all-round athletes in the school, and if he thought like that, there must be something in what so many people were saying who ran down games.

[3] Henderson, Hanford C., *What It Means to Be Educated,* p. 49.

. . . As far as Fernhurst was concerned, the days of a blind worship of sports was over. . . .[4]

The average athlete seldom turns aside to criticize the harmful features of athletics but when he does so it is to the point:

John

While I was writing this letter, one of my high school friends, who played on the football team came in and began talking. He said he thinks athletics are more harmful than good. In his Freshman year he made 95's, and, in his Sophomore year he went out for football, with the result that his grades fell. Then in his Junior year his grades fell down to failure. He also said that when he got home he would be too tired to study or do anything besides go to bed.

Harry

I have seen many excellent boy athletes, who were overworked and fatigued. In other cases their muscles were formed too early and this retarded their growth. Some say you can't be an athlete and an honor student, but I worked toward that goal this year, and I think I have come pretty close to both. Usually, however, the fellows on the teams are unwilling to work on their studies. They say that they are tired, meaning that physical exertion makes them mentally lazy.

Fred

It must be remembered, however, that there are certain things about baseball that are very undesirable. First, there is a tendency only to let the best players play, shutting out those who have not had much experience or who are younger. Second, there is a danger of

[4] Waugh, Alex, *The Loom of Youth,* pp. 319-320.

developing "chronic kickers," that is, fellows who are always disagreeing with the umpire's decision. Third, there is the danger of getting into the baseball rut. A fellow gets started playing baseball and likes it so well that he refuses to play anything else.

Some boys become so much interested in a single sport that they miss out on many other phases of life, but the same could be said of debating. These manias for basketball, or billiards, or dancing, constitute a menace to proper personal development. It is a form of isolation. Then, too, not only are some games physically dangerous, a point which parents often take seriously, but there is the risk of excessive fatigue, due to the constant temptation to overexertion under the prolonged strain of grueling practice sessions and championship contests.

Fred

Athletics are all right in one sense of the word, but I find it is degrading as far as building a strong body is concerned. The two games I know fairly well—football and basketball—are not especially favorable to good health. Under ordinary circumstances, basketball is a terrific strain on the player because it requires every bit of energy and stamina he may possess over a long period. College men are able to stand more, but the high school lad is seriously affected by a long schedule.

A good example of this sort of thing comes to my mind in the form of a championship high school basketball team. This team had speed, weight and versatility to overcome all of its opponents. That year they played through a heavy schedule of games, twenty-one in all. The school demanded that they win. They were entered in the tournament and came through winners.

Since then I have followed the careers of these boys,

and the only ones who have made good in college athletics are those who took a complete rest after leaving high school. The captain of the team was barred from college competition because of heart trouble. The other members of the team are almost useless and the folks at home are wondering why it is. They have been "burned out," so to speak.

In addition to the other ways in which overattention to athletics narrows a boy's interest to a few segments of life, and its harmful physical overstrain, the competitive factor often leads to the partiality shown to certain players, to jealousy, and to unfair practices. The premium for winning a game or a place on the team is so great that succumbing to the temptation to resort to selfish and base tactics too often robs the victory of its glory.

Fred

The general idea of many fellows in athletics is to beat the other fellows out of their places. And in order to get the positions, they start tripping and doing other things to win. By this dirty work, these crooks often win out. Even I have been given the name "killer" in basketball. I have the tendency to hit hard with my arms in the attempt to secure the ball from the other fellow. When I come down with my long arms, boy, oh boy, does it hurt!

Martin

The fellow's place I used to take was jealous and one night he tripped me in practice. The coach got real sore and told him where to "horn in," so the fellow quit.

Walter

If someone was to foul me intentionally and continuously, I would warn him. If he did it again I would

take means to make him quit. I admit I should not do it, but I just don't stop to think.

The rivalry between cities may become so acute that they sever playing relations, with the result that attitudes of hatred are developed in the minds of the students.

Martin

Our neighboring rival broke relations because of stressing victory too much. These two towns were keenest rivals. Last year our principal thought it would be of advantage to the treasury of both schools to revive the broken friendship. It seems foolish now that we fellows regarded those boys as crooks and everything else, when this year's competition has shown us that they are human and like to be friendly.

Success honestly won is quickly put in jeopardy if the winner begins to trade upon it openly.

I played on the team for three years and thought, "Boy, you're all right." However, I'd never say this out loud. Then when I got my picture in the papers, it capped the climax. This was in my second year, so later when I was elected captain and had a write-up under my picture, I acted modest about it, but not in my inner self. I have those clippings yet.[5]

Fred

Fellows get the so-called "big head" when they know they have a place on the team. If I did, it probably would mean loss in the game and more. We have a "big head" on the team, so I am going to watch him close and see what happens.

[5] Document No. 23.

A few months later in another letter, Fred says:

To make a long story short, he never got over the "big head" which is bringing him to destruction. One of the outstanding features is that even though he is a "star" player in football and an average basketball player, he is not popular at school.

Athletics and Its Effect on Personality

Athletics as now conducted, whether a boy gains a perch on the pedestal of popularity or is pushed back into the limbo of obscurity, subjects his personality to influences for good or ill. Henry's own account of his career as an athlete brings this out vividly. For convenience in presentation it is subdivided into six stages.

First, converging social pressures arouse in him an interest in athletics and spur him on even though he says he is "punk."

My father was quite a good baseball player, and my mother held a very great interest in it. They were disgusted with me for not knowing the game. Baseball was hard for me to learn. Later we moved into a neighborhood where there were lots of athletes my size and age. I was considered a "punk" baseball player. I got in with some fellows much younger. Here I was still inferior but I played the games as well as I could.

My mother was averse to my playing football because she knew football and thought it a boiler-maker's game. At first, with the older fellows, I was always the last one to be chosen because of my size. However, I used to tackle players twice my size and catch forward passes that had gone astray, and dash through small holes that they had left unguarded. Anyway, in time they regarded me as a pretty good player, but they never expected

much, because I was small. Whenever I would make a good tackle or something, they would go crazy, but whenever I missed anything, they would let it go and say nothing.

Second, during this period in which he was more or less of a rank novice, he blames others or tries to justify himself for his failures.

I was a freshman at high school when the question of track came up. It was talked about a lot. I was an all-round man here, that is, equally "punk" at everything. Anyway, I got in on all the meets and did my best. When we had our "Frosh-Soph" meet, I had failed in the tryouts for everything, so I looked for an event where no one was entered. I took the shot-put. I went to the Gym Director, and asked him if I might enter the event. He looked queerly at me and said that I might if I wanted to. The day before the meet he "talked me up" in all of the gym classes. As was expected I made a terrible fizzle out of it, but I gained many new friends. We had a Pioneer track meet that year and I failed to place. I was considered a "flop" as a track athlete.

In the third period, the temporary and partial success in class football which fell to his lot was accompanied by the emergence of a feeling that now he was cutting quite a figure.

The next year I played class football. When the captain first saw me coming out for the team, he told me that I wasn't needed. After a while when a player was running with the ball, I hit him with all I had, and the coach admitted I would be some good. When the season ended eleven men made the team and I was one of them. To a player of ordinary size, the plays I made were

not sensational, but for me I suppose they were. One game I was largely responsible for our team losing, but I did not get the "razz" because the players expected it. There's where a little player has an advantage in a football game. His feats are magnified. His errors are minimized. Now with a big fellow, the feats are neither minimized nor magnified. They remain real, but he sure does get the "razz" when he makes errors.

The fourth is a period of setbacks which deflate his elation over his previous prowess and cause him to underrate himself in an even more unjustifiable degree.

I came back to school and tried track again. I failed to place in any of the meets, but I kept on justifying myself. At last, when the All-City try-outs came along, I felt like a first place. I failed to qualify. That was the last straw. That was a cloudburst. That was the alarm clock that awakened me to the fact that I was no good.

Everything seemed a failure to me. I failed in track, I failed in one of my studies, and I had lost all the confidence of my friends. What little popularity I had when I played football had all decayed. I failed in everything on earth, but I did not fail with God.

The scene of the fifth stage is a Y. M. C. A. camp.

While at camp I threw away my old "justification" policy. I tried harder than ever to be an "all-round" man in camp. I was the best baseball player on the team. I was high point man in our track meet. I worked for it all—with His inspiration. It is not I who had won alone, but through the inspiration of God.

Sixth and final stage. On his return from camp,

Henry continues to keep more within his class, confining his athletic activities to those of the Boys' Club, De Molay, and similar teams, where it is possible for him to keep up his end. A fresh return of confidence in himself follows and when he does reenter high school competition he is in a mood to do his best and let it go at that.

When I came back from camp, I was more confident of myself. I went out for cross-country. Of course, I did not get anything because I did not care for the sport. However, I resolved to give all I had in the state meet and for the first time in my life I fought during an athletic contest. I did not get any commendable place, but I ran faster than ever before. I was just about ready to collapse at the finish. I was satisfied. I had done my best.

In basketball I was not very good, but I was good enough to make our team in the club. We lost most of our games because we gave up before we started. The opponents always looked too good for us.

Right here I might say a word or two about tennis. It took me one year to learn the game. The next year I almost beat my teacher. Then at camp I was runner-up in the singles championship. This year I'm not starting out so bad. I have not entered any tournaments, but I've beaten some pretty good players.

CHAPTER VI

CHOOSING A VOCATION

Boys do not spend all their time over plots and schemes which will yield immediate satisfactions. Often they long to peer into the future and see how things are going to come out. While they may be carried along by habit in the routine of their high school education, as a rule, they have serious hours of considering the possibilities of entering college and at least a preliminary canvassing of the question of their future vocation. The fact that they are unable to determine the future with any degree of certainty leaves them deeply perplexed at times. Doubts, fears and questions crowd into their minds. Such a spirit of restlessness often becomes acute enough to interfere with the performance of their daily tasks. Such thoughts run through the mind of the ambitious boy as, "How are things going to turn out for me? Will I be a success or failure? I wish I were ten or fifteen years older for then I would know with more certainty about the outcomes of life."

Boys who make tentative decisions regarding their future vocation and education, it is not surprising to learn, pursue their studies with more earnestness than those who do not. Statistical studies seem to indicate that undergraduates who do not come even to a provisional vocational decision are more in-

clined to play truant or drop out of school. Some boys who express themselves as very certain of their future occupations may change their minds later but the fleeting choice so made will steady them for the time being. Others remain absolutely "at sea" without the least working clue as to what calling might be best for them to choose. Some of these give the subject little or no thought. They just drift into trusting to luck and taking what comes along. The group constituting the biggest percentage, especially among the younger high school boys, get no further than just thinking the problem over. They are trying, it must be confessed, a bit aimlessly to find out. Some days they think one way, and a week later very differently. A good representative of the groups of boys which have already acquired more permanent vocational interests says:

> The thing uppermost in my mind is to be a lawyer. I began thinking of this as a vocation while I was still in grammar school. My father and mother were both pleased with my choice. They believed that I would make a success in this work. I entered high school with the idea of becoming a lawyer, and while I did not like Latin, I took it for a year at the suggestion of my parents. I intend to enter the University with the idea of studying law.[1]

A spokesman for the groups of boys who prove to be pretty unsettled in this matter of a vocation writes:

> While in high school I have wanted to do a number of things. First, I wanted to be an electrical engineer, not

[1] Document No. 7.

knowing a thing about it. Then I wanted to go into commercial work and I changed to the commercial course. It was hard for my mother to get along, so I got into the Mechanical Trade School where I could work and learn a trade. Then, I decided to go to college, so I had to change back to regular high school work.[2]

A state of indecision in regard to one's future vocation is productive of restlessness, decay of ambition, and in some cases, depression, not to be wondered at in view of the emotional upsets during the period of adolescence. References to these conditions crop out more or less spontaneously in the correspondence.

Harold

These are some things I've thought about that would do for a vocation. I want to get on a boat and travel all over the world facing life as it is. I'd find out if I am worth "a whoop." Or, I think it would be wonderful to join the navy and learn discipline. Then again I have a notion that I want to hustle freight on the docks—foolish, but it's one of my plans. After that I'd know what I wanted to be.

Leonard

I would like to ask you a very important question—that of my vocation. There are two things I have on my mind at present, business and teaching. I love to be neat and keep books. But I'd love to teach. It would be mathematics. I would strive to be the head of some mathematics department in a college, say Yale.

A few months later, he writes:

[2] Document No. 8.

My vocation is more unsettled than it has ever been. My latest idea is along dramatic lines. You will forgive me for bragging, but I know I have a little dramatic ability at least. Plays and movies and wonderful acting are my weakness. I'm always someone else, acting their part, or dressing up. One of my teachers commented favorably on this recently.

Many boys talk over these problems with their parents, teachers and other adults:

I had a little talk with my art teacher. He said the fact that I came to study art, plus my continued interest in the work, indicates that I have sufficient interest in art to make it my life work. Many trained artists, however, are walking the streets to-day looking for a job.[3]

To make a long story short, I am still working for Uncle Sam and am as much "at sea" as ever about what I'd like to do. I am as discouraged as ever with present conditions and feel like a "ship without a rudder." I believe Chicago has several vocational experts, more or less famous in their line, whose business it is to analyze people and tell them the thing at which they are most likely to succeed. I am tired of drifting in the hope that some day something will come along with a sign hung on it, "Take a chance on me." I think Basil King was "all wet" when he expressed the idea in one of his books that we should wait for the Divine plan to work itself out.[4]

The problem of selecting a suitable vocation is greatly complicated to-day by the fact that the variety of possible vocations for young men has increased in number so rapidly. The time has gone by when there were only a few vocations, such as the priest-

[3] Document No. 20.
[4] Document No. 22.

hood, military service, commerce, and agriculture. Their number has increased to several hundred at present on account of specialization in industry. Is it any wonder that boys are perplexed?

Two of the boys describe the relation of a choice of vocation to life in general in a more philosophical way:

When we read the biographies of different people, we are very apt to look upon their lives as a well-built temple, each act in their lives a stone, well placed and in order with all the rest. It all looks planned out and systematic in its finished form. This is because we are not told of all the opportunities the person had, any of which, had they been followed, would have resulted in the building of quite a different temple based on the foundations built previous to that time.[5]

If a bug were to crawl from the base of a tree to a topmost branch his completed path to the tip would seem to be very regular, even planned, and possibly the only possible course. But very early in his journey he had to make decisions as to which limb he would take when he came to the fork. There were countless opportunities presented all along as to which way to go. I think of my vocational plans in this way.[6]

Some Factors Determining a Choice of Vocation

A boy is most apt to be guided in choosing a vocation by his own ideas and fancies concerning his abilities and interests. One boy will feel attracted to farming because he likes the out-of-doors, another to auto repair work because he is handy with tools, and still another to the work of physical education

[5] Document No. 23.
[6] Document No. 10.

because he wishes to strengthen his own weak body. That is, such a preference does not necessarily indicate possession of the special ability required. Sometimes these leanings appear very early in childhood; in other cases, the praise and approval of parents or teachers may awaken a consciousness of some particular skill which the boy possesses.

Henry

You know it is an axiom of life to make the most of your talents, as is preached by Christ. He bestows on every one certain talents and one's life work is to discover them and to use them for a good cause.

Harold

I am thinking of taking up as my life work either public accounting, salesmanship, or architecture. I took two terms of mechanical drawing. In the second term, I made thirteen "fives" and one "four" out of fourteen drawings.

Verne

My life work will be chemistry or medicine. I'm not crazy about books and reading. That's why I don't think I'll be an "M.D." In chemistry you can experiment around and I think it's lots of fun. Dad will help me in whatever I take up. He is "in good" with some of the large plants that use chemists, so that will help me get a job. Of course, if I take up medicine, he'll start me in business and let me work in his office.

Frank

My summer employment was in a labor gang. I was the youngest. At first they tried to make me the "goat," but after I had shown a little accuracy with bricks, and so forth, I wasn't bothered. I liked the boss. When the gang was busy we would go off to the boiler room and

talk chemistry, science, etc. I have studied electricity and mechanics ever since I was old enough to know that they existed. I have always wanted to be my best in whatever I do. If my ambition to be an electrical engineer is realized, then I will want to be like Steinmetz. The only work I do is carrying out creations of my own, at present.

The first inklings of many boys in regard to a vocation seem to be mere notions which trail off into something extremely vague or desultory. Something will strike a boy's fancy and he will jump to the conclusion, "That's the work for me." It may be the sight of the mail train coming in from the coast, which will start his imagination into play and lead him to think that railroading opens a world of interesting possibilities to him. Or, on hearing a brilliant orator, he may begin to visualize to himself what it would be like to stand in that position, receiving the glory and applause of the crowd. In still other cases, a teacher's special ability to interest him in her subject may determine the direction in which he will turn.

Henry

I did not like history or my history teacher, but my English teacher, although strict, impressed me in three ways; her faith in human nature, her method of teaching, and the fact that she did not use sarcasm. By the end of my first year, I had my entire course planned to fit into journalism, even to the intent of going to the university.

In spite of the fact that Henry received rather poor grades in English, the power exercised over him by his respect for his teacher in that subject led him

to continue in her classes. Two years later, his leanings toward journalism as a career were strengthened by the following incident:

A recent sermon stands out in my mind. It has aided me greatly in the building of my life plan. The most vivid words of it are these: "The thing the world needs most to-day is regeneration, a restoration of the spirit of Christ. Christ came only once, but He has been needed many times since."

While I planned out my life work before I heard this sermon, this aided me greatly. If I should say something from the pulpit that had a high moral meaning to it, people might be very interested, but they would say, "Well, he's a preacher, and he's paid to say that." If I wrote the same thing in a newspaper their attitude would be quite different.

During the entire period while his vocational interests were brewing, Henry did his newspaper reading with a career in journalism uppermost in his mind. His courses at school were selected with this in view. The larger social problems of city life were evaluated by him in relation to the possibilities of journalism as a vocation.

Henry

I read the papers which contained such crimes as murder, auto larceny, and misdeeds. I resolved to use my talents to do one of the hardest jobs, that of reducing the crime wave and inspiring the world to right living. Now I realized that the press was my greatest aid. That powerful fourth estate, the newspaper, is greater than the pulpit, the senate, or any speaker.

Through a hard college course I shall get a degree and a job as reporter. That is only the first step. If I

am promoted to the job of editor, I shall have more time to write little articles on the development of character.

In the case of Henry, his poor school work administered a setback to his normal desire to "be somebody" as a scholar and obtaining in that way recognition at school. As a defensive measure against the sense of inferiority thus engendered he tries to turn the antagonism of his teacher, imagined or real, into an alibi. Badly in need of a changed program he comes in contact the next school term with a teacher in the field of English who stimulates him to apply himself better. Even though he still gets poor grades he turns about and begins to head the right way, with the result that he thinks better of himself and his standing improves a lot without waiting for high grades.

Of course impressions which the members of a calling make upon a boy plus the slighting remarks concerning it, common in the circles he moves, may drive him from rather than draw him to this vocation.

Ralph

When I was younger I thought of the ministry, but I have found most of the clergy are tongue-tied and narrow-minded. I have learned that some fellows are also held in check lest they "step on somebody's toes." So it is in everything it seems.

The attitude which parents take is an important factor in the choice of a vocation. The relative weight of this factor and the methods employed to attain its object have been changing rapidly in the

past generation. Granddads can remember the time when a boy followed the vocation of his father as a matter of course. Even to-day among some nationalities the parents expect to dictate the trade a boy shall follow. In the main, however, boys have gained the right to make their own decisions regarding their future occupations. Parents continue to advise, or even object to a son's gradually formed choice, but the old undisputed powers of dictation are fast disappearing among high school boys as these documents indicate.

Adolph

Ever since I can remember it has been taken for granted that I would become a physician. I didn't get along well in school, and I did not care to go to college. If I graduated from high school, that was enough. I became interested in printing and began paying quite a bit of attention to it. My father, however, continued to plan for me to enter medicine.

John

I am interested in medicine, and to-day I picked up a magazine called *Hygea* in which there was an article on the Child Guidance Clinic. My father is connected with such a clinic and the article caught my eye. I read it carefully and found it very interesting. If it is possible, I would like to become a doctor.

Donald

The thoughts I have had about my life work since last summer would more than fill a book, I think. Anyway, a little time lost in choosing the right vocation is worth more than time lost later on because of selecting the wrong vocation. My two outstanding ideas have been

auto mechanics and engineering. I think every person should know at least two trades, so that in case of poor health or unemployment, he can get another job. My parents want me to do what I prefer.

Frank

I worked in this store during my vacation. I took an interest in the people that were customers. I used to like to watch their faces when they heard the prices of the articles. It was interesting too, to study the different classes of people that came there, rich and poor. My parents favored me working here, but I was not so pleased because I was not made a partner after the first month.

Boys will often talk more freely with an adult friend outside the family than they will with their parents on important personal problems like the choice of a vocation. Well aware of this fact high schools, Boys' Clubs, Y. M. C. A.'s and the Boy Scouts keep their eyes open for opportunities to offer advice based upon their knowledge of a boy's ability and interests. In the Boys' Club, the industrial classes in which the boy excels constitute an index of what they need in the way of vocational guidance and placement. The Boy Scouts build their vocational program around the ceremony of conferring badges of merit. In the Y. M. C. A. informal group discussions or talks are used to awaken the boys to the need of considering the subject of their vocational choice, and an analysis blank is supplied them as a guide to even a tentative choice.

Ray

Our Hi-Y is not going along so smoothly but I think it will get back to normal next semester. I am graduat-

ing in February and we seniors are holding a vocational guidance program. We are discussing such subjects as "What should determine a boy's vocation?" "How can service be worked into one's vocation?" and "How can one determine the future developments of a vocation?"

Alfred

My goal though similar to that of the minister or the professional labor leader, is different only to the extent that I want to be an attorney for labor, so I can look after their interests and see that they get a square deal from the "monsters" of industry. Thus my goal may be said to be that of hastening the Kingdom of Christ on earth.

Taken altogether the facts seem to indicate that vocational decisions are still based quite largely on chance and circumstance, rather than on careful study.

The Significance of a Vocational Decision

Situations arise in the experience of high school boys which tend to force them to a decision on the question of a vocation in life. The approach of graduation, if a boy is still undecided, causes him no little mental disturbance on this point. Neighbors, friends and relatives are asking again and again, "What are you going to do?" As an intelligent lad, who has been told that he is the "captain of his destiny," he is almost forced to commit himself. The seesaws of the pendulum are well set forth in the case quoted below. The accompanying dates are inserted to bring out the phases of indecision through which the boy went both prior to graduation from high school and afterwards.

Martin

Now about my vocational plans. I know what I'm going to do, but I have not decided just exactly how I'm going about it. Allow me to recall a certain State's Attorney in Chicago who was killed by a gang because he was rightfully punishing criminals. Well, I've made up my mind to study law, to follow in his steps, to do all I can in carrying out what he started. As I write this I realize the work I shall have to go through to get to his position, but it's got to be. What is puzzling me is where to go to school. You know when I read of the gang killing that lawyer, it made my blood boil.—April 6th.

A sense of mission in the world is not an unusual visitation with many high school boys. However it is well to bear in mind that this decision may fluctuate and shift, even within a few weeks' period.

Martin

Recently I have given some attention to aviation. I am collecting some data on various schools. Three of us are interested, in fact, two of the boys plan to go to some aviation school soon. Do you think it foolish of me to borrow the money to go with them?—May 2nd.

Just now I feel as though I am between two fires, one as hot as the other. I want to be of service, not to this generation or to the next, but to the boys and girls a hundred years from now. In short, it is our government that I am aiming at. Please do not look for a lot of radical ideas to follow. However, I believe that by education our government and other irritating situations can be corrected. Like man, like state.—June 24th.

When I spring my contemplation on you, please don't picture me as a youth in his teens, who will hurl himself

madly into fighting the evils of the world, only to shed utopias with every passing year. I believe it is possible to have a country free from shocking crimes, gasping poverty, and other evils which keep people from living the abundant life. That is why I believe in universal education. A generation must be prepared to watch this government of ours and to safeguard it.—July 17th.

In the meantime, I have been doing a bit of thinking and some dreaming. Since we have talking movies and movies in natural color, why can't they be made more educational. Does it sound possible to you to make talking, natural color movies of laboratory experiments in biology, physics, and a thousand other interesting things. Then the smallest high school could have the best instructors.—October 2nd.

Among the factors which Martin recognizes he must reckon with in carrying his choice of a vocation to a success is the necessity of obtaining a steady job at a living wage.

Martin

Henry Ford has said, "There is work for any man who wants work." But he failed to say, "There is a living wage in this work." Yes, I can get a job, but if I have a family I am in a different situation. It isn't equality of ability we want, but an equal chance to show our ability. —May 2nd.

A second complicating factor is the economic situation of his folks at home. What is his responsibility there?

Martin

Dad has been laid off. It may be permanent or it may

not. Anyway it sort of makes me do some debating. I have not seen my brother about it. He may have a solution. However, I am going ahead and try to get another job.—August 1st.

A third factor which he feels demands careful thought is proper preparation for his vocation, which brings up for decisive action the question of whether he shall go to college.

Martin

Well, knowing what I want to do, I might just as well prepare myself for it. Should I fail to do this, must I go through life forever cursing myself for being a coward and too lazy to make things happen as they should? I must go to the university.—June 24th.

After visiting most every bakery and a few candy stores in town, without receiving any satisfaction, my hopes took a slip. But that was just a starter, for the university employment bureau is willing to do all it can, but it could assure me nothing definitely. And I must be certain. I am not financially flush, so I cannot gamble on picking up a job later. By this time, I was in a "tail spin." When they informed me that my chances of earning my meals in the dormitory dining room were slim, I took a "nose dive." Now that I am back on earth, the next thing for me to do, is to make a few resolutions. And that is exactly what I did. I still feel the necessity of earning more money and going to college.—August 24th.

This thoroughly typical case of the thinking done by high school boys over the problems connected with the choice of a vocation is worth careful study. Too often parents and workers with boys in churches

and Y. M. C. A.s raise the ambitions of boys with insufficient regard for their ability or social circumstances. Adults focus the attention of the boy on the goal or the "end" of the process, while the boy must continually grapple with "ways and means."

The Life Work Puzzle

The kind of trial and error process of arriving at a final decision concerning what to do as a life work through which many high school boys go is described by George. His experiences were characteristic and the fundamental factors involved can be duplicated over and over again. He permits us to share in all of the elements in the situation as they interact upon each other.

George

My first serious decision came about the time of my graduation from grammar school. There was a class prophecy. Until graduation it was kept as a secret from everybody. I visualized what I would do with myself as described in the prophecy.

Graduation from grammar school confronts a boy with several problems which awaken him to the need of choosing a vocation. Which is better, to go to high school or take a job? Shall it be a technical school or an academic institution? What main course shall he take, scientific, commercial, or literary?

The influence of his home may be paramount. As George says:

The first real choice was based almost entirely on home influences. My father had been a wage-earner all

his life. He knew and exaggerated the dependence of the wage-earner on the whim of the boss. His children were not going to be "slaves of capital." My choice could not be business, for I didn't want to dirty my hands with foul industrialism. My choice had to be a profession. Medicine was desirable, but the childish fear of dead bodies and skeletons ruled it out. Law was, of course, a parasitic business. Dentistry didn't sound so good to me. Architecture sounded best of all. The fact that I had never shown proficiency in anything that related to art did not influence my decision.

A second factor which carries great weight is that of the school, its courses of study and the direct help which it seeks to give a boy in solving his vocational problems.

In my first year at high school, I was subjected to a vocational course. Before the end of the course the students had to make some kind of a decision. By the time I had studied several vocations, I was not as sure of myself as a year before. Engineering had made some appeal. Farming was all right. My official choice of farming was based on the idea of getting away from the noise, confusion, swindle, and injustice of the city.

Because of the ideal of getting away from a filthy trade, I selected courses in abstract subjects during my high school years, science and mathematics, for example. These courses were easy for me and I enjoyed them. Then another factor entered. I was working after school in a print shop which my father had established. The ideal of an honest hard-working artisan appealed to me, too. My problems became three-cornered. I was taking mathematics from a man I liked, and I liked the subject. One day I let fall from my lips that I was thinking seriously of becoming a teacher of mathematics. This was

followed by a lot of talk at home about the low pay of teachers. When I mentioned it to my teacher at school, he wasn't very enthusiastic one way or the other. After that, teaching gradually sank out of consciousness.

The reasons given above by George for selecting agriculture, printing, and later teaching, are representative of the high school boy's point of view.

When members of the faculty or others spoke to me of my future, I said I was going to work awhile, and then go on to school. I had a kind of feeling of just letting things happen unhindered for a while. Then I would step out and do something. Or, if the chance didn't come, I was satisfied with being an honest printer.

Later I found the idea of engineering uppermost in my thoughts. Closely connected with the idea were thoughts about being a man of initiative, a leader of men, as well as a benefactor of humanity. This time marked an important change in my thinking. Toward graduation, the serious problem of how I was to be financed through college became dominant.

What is a boy to say if he is being asked over and over again just what he is going to do in life? Obviously he will get up some reply to have ready to make. In that case it may mean very little if he says in return that he is going to be a plumber. After he has said it enough times, and if he knows it pleases his parents, he may begin to feel somewhat bound by it. On the other hand, some boys stand out obstinately and refuse to commit themselves in any positive fashion. George had reached that stage with his announcement that he was going to work first and go back to school afterwards.

All this time I was working in my father's print shop. I didn't get along very well with my father. There was too much noise and argument about the shop. One day I went out to answer a "help wanted" advertisement for selling magazine subscriptions. Every evening I had to stand a storm of sarcasm and abuse at home, administered when I got back from the house to house tramping. Finally, I came back to the shop to work.

Later I left again for the same reason as before. This time I began to sell a type of investment, of which I sold a little. I was more easily brought back to the shop this time, and went out soliciting business. Then I was in the shop very little. The next time I left the shop, I went into real estate selling, but I didn't sell any. Home was hell for me then. I decided to get out of sight. I said I was going to a relative who was in the real estate business, so I left home and went to the city where he lived.

The first thing I did when I got there was to look up a phrenologist that I had read about in a newspaper advertisement. It cost $10.00, and when it was over, I had $4.00 left to start out with. The gentleman asked me enough questions to know all about me, and then measured my head with a caliper. For one thing he told me to become a hardware salesman, second, to develop a sense of detail, and last that I should join the Y.M.C.A. Well, I tried to get into the hardware business but without success. To study detail I got a job in a woolen goods house, but the salary was too low to live on. Then my real estate relative offered me a paying job. And finally, I joined the Y. M. C. A.

The "Y" appealed to me right from the first. While I still held the idea that I was to be a salesman, I dreamed of earning a lot of money and establishing a social center in which the defects of the "Y" would be absent, and all of the benefits would be preserved. A common-sense reli-

gion would be taught in place of theology—this was one of my ideas.

The difficulty with this plan was making the money. As I worked away at my job making no progress, the idea began to fade. Perhaps I could work in the Y. M. C. A. and gradually change it from within. I asked the sponsor of my group club what he thought of my going into Y. M. C. A. work. He told me my religion, atheism, would never fit in with "Y" work. He gave me a vocational guidance blank to fill out. I returned it to him, but he never told me the result. He seemed to have forgotten about it.

One thing that he did do was to suggest some books for me to read concerning Christianity. I began to see that Christianity wasn't so bad, and I gradually accepted it unconsciously, because it was a requisite to the profession I was interested in. One day I talked this over with my brother. He asked me the direct question of whether I believed in the divinity of Jesus. That one question started me thinking all over again.

I have often wondered what would have happened, if I hadn't gone into such a careful and prolonged study of so many kinds of professions. Perhaps, if I had rested with any of my decisions, I would now be started on my way to success in that line. After all, I would be rendering my service to society.

At present my choice of a vocation is between teaching and social work. I do not think of these as alternatives. A lot of things may happen before I get this mess straightened out.

It is not difficult to perceive how these vocational experiments of George would lead to significant developments in his personality, as well. While he was in love with engineering he takes occasion to

remark that "closely related to this idea were thoughts about being a man of initiative, a leader of men, as well as a benefactor of humanity." When he decided to become a salesman he was thrown in with a new type of people, dressed more neatly than when a printer, and took on the attitudes of a "go-getter." He speaks more definitely about changes in his thinking in discussing his interest in becoming a Y. M. C. A. secretary.

The way a boy is to earn his living will determine his status as a citizen in the community, whether he will live in the city or small town, his friends, recreation, and many other phases of what is involved in a worthwhile life. Likewise, the rôle which a boy is to play in the group and the community, his personality, will differ according to his vocation or life work in many respects.

PART IV
HIS LIFE PRINCIPLES

CHAPTER VII

MORALS AND IDEALS

During the pre-school period, the ethical code of the family group is imposed on the average child without much resistance on his part. This state of affairs begins to change, however, when the child starts to play with other boys and girls or goes to school. It soon picks up little practices to which mother objects—the use of "bad" words, looking like a tough, or playing marbles "for keeps." Such differences in behavior standards set up conflicts at home which grow in intensity as the child's sense of independence increases, and frequently they terminate in open revolt.

The processes used by the social groups in which the child lives and moves and has his being, in civilizing and domesticating this immature individual, and completing his assimilation as a respectable citizen, do not meet with ready acceptance on his part in all cases. Many conflicts based on these pronounced variations in moral and ethical standards are almost bound to arise.

Regarding the modern situation one boy writes frankly:

The cat-in-the-alley idea is good. But isn't it too bad that so many little pussies rarely have the opportunity

to nose around in the alleys to find out for themselves what the outside world really looks like? And isn't it amusing the way harbored cats feel so superior to the alley cats? Yet, the alley cat is free! The alley cat knows! The alley cat lives! His life is burdened by hardships, he may have shoes thrown at him, he must fight for the living he makes, but we are fools to pity him. We but get scratched. Between the two he is the least to be pitied.[1]

Another uses the following plain language in taking a similar stand:

Charles

You take a lad of seventeen, hold him in and rule him with an iron hand. What will happen? It will not be long before you have a sullen, back-biting, stubborn lad, if he is anything like me. This boy may go to Sunday school, stay for church, and take communion. Why? Because he has to do so. Not long after this, he may break all bounds and "haul freight" for a long sought freer atmosphere.

In sharp contrast, other boys are quite as honestly conservative in their reactions. They have been so well indoctrinated, or they find the home and church attitudes so satisfying that they remain contented with them.

Fred

Evil habits are not of value to life. For instance, the cigarette is one of the most harmful habits a young boy can get into. It leads him to evil places and surrounds him with weak companions. In this way he gets in with

[1] Document No. 6.

wrong company and this keeps leading him just a little further each day. The cigarette gets a boy "in dutch." Chasing around late at night and going out with certain girls is another evil. Such boys become "hard boiled" and rough.

Ralph

As I was walking home from work the other day, a fellow I know came along. After we had conversed for awhile, he pulled out some pictures he had. I suspected them of being dirty, but I looked at the top one and it was just a comic. After I looked as far as the third one, I handed them back to him. He asked me if I had seen them before, and I, seeing an excuse for returning them said, "Yes," instead of saying that I didn't care to look at smutty pictures. He asked me where he could get some different kinds. I learned later that a certain photographer sold them on the sly.

I never was the "swearing or smoking" kind, but it was not by virtue. It was because it never appealed to me. I have always had friends who swear and smoke, but I have never done it.

Martin

We have some cheating in our school, which in my opinion could be stopped. I talked with the Principal, who is our Hi-Y leader. He agreed with me, yet no steps have been taken to do anything about it. We did not have much trouble with moral problems in high school, except with smoking. Then the smoking was not on the part of the boys, but the girls. Our Hi-Y Club passed a resolution never to allow a girl to smoke in our presence.

Still a third group admit that they believe in clean morals, but openly confess that they themselves get

careless at times. They recognize a difference between their ideals and their conduct. They admit that they like to "take a chance" and have a little excitement.

Leonard

I had to give a talk at a banquet the other evening on morals. I don't believe in smoking for those under twenty. Of course, I smoke on the sly sometimes, maybe six "cigs" in a year or so. I do it just to be smart. Next is "No profanity." Yes, I swear sometimes. I only swear when I want to be clever, for I seldom lose my temper. Drinking! I shall drink in all probability when I go to college. Not much, but that's what I'm fearing. I shall want to drink, but I may become a real friend of liquor, and that's a bad outlook. I don't think the school gives enough attention to morals. It won't help much to have Latin, history or "math," if we don't have moral training, too.

Speculation as to what may happen when a boy gets to college is very common. Ralph's reaction is quite different from that of Leonard:

Ralph

I happened to mention that I was going to the State University this fall at the place where I work after school. Immediately I was surrounded and heard remarks like this: "You'll be a goner when the right girl hits you," "You're going to hell when you get there," "They have plenty to drink down there." I ignored many of the comments, but bluntly told the gang that I hoped to be a better man, when I came back. That caused a roar of laughter. I let them kid me for awhile, then I bawled them out. Their big arguments were that ninety per cent of the students were drunks, and that

college ruined many a decent lad. Then they prophesied that I would be a preacher or a lawyer. Now I'm determined to go to the State University and disprove all they have said.

Many of these boys who uphold high morals belong to the youthful hosts who are greatly irritated and annoyed by what they consider overrighteousness on the part of certain adults. These members of the older generation have the best of intentions, no doubt, but they stir up reactions contrary to their desires in the younger generation.

Charles

The older heads, or many of them, take us fellows all wrong. They think that all we do, when together, is to play poker, smoke, and tell smutty stories. We do to some extent. But when a young fellow gets to the age of seventeen, he starts thinking differently about such things, if he thinks about them at all. If he has any pride, he will be ashamed to indulge in what the "old folks" call "sowing wild oats." If he has any manhood in him at all, he will take his stand against those who make that their pastime. Yet, you must not expect us to be angels either.

Harold

I've heard the younger generation cussed and discussed so much that I'm disgusted. I have my faults, so has everybody, but why get disturbed! I think I am as good as the average and for those who run down the younger generation to criticize doesn't help. They should keep their noses out, unless they know for sure what they are talking about. I am a fellow who never wants to stay at home, and this causes my mother lots of worry, but I

am doing no harm. I'm just pleasure-mad, so mother says.

Leonard

The way the older folks shake their heads when anyone mentions liquor, I laugh. I think many who drink, among the younger generation, do so to shock the old folks. I know I do lots of things to shock them, if they are easily shocked.

Of course, many boys encounter adults who undermine the morals of youth consciously or unconsciously.

Ralph

I worked for a man who runs an excellent tailoring establishment. I was the general helper around the place. One evening he showed me some smutty pictures. I glanced at them and threw them aside. He forced a laugh, when he saw that I was angry. He feared I would tell my parents, but generally I keep things like that to myself. Of course, those in the office wondered why we weren't as friendly as we used to be, and why I quit my job.

Ralph is giving expression to a characteristic attitude of high school boys on moral issues, when he says, "Generally I keep things like that to myself." Boys are decidedly secretive about conduct, their own or that of other boys, before adult associates like parents and teachers, for fear of the questioning, scolding, preaching or criticism which may be expected to follow.

Group Social Pressures

The unwritten laws which form the code of conduct approved by any group are ceaselessly at work

compressing the ethical standards of its members into definite molds. Few individuals can maintain active membership in a group for any extended period and successfully resist these forms of social and moral pressure. For a short time a boy may hang around with the group and refrain from participation in a group practice like gambling, smoking, or stealing, but he can seldom withstand indefinitely the pressures exerted upon him "to fall in line" in the form of ridicule, coaxing and his own "sense of being out of place." The average boy sooner or later does whatever the group indorses, thinks as it does on subjects under discussion, and it is usually safe to assume that his attitudes and prejudices will echo those of the group he is with, whether it be street gang or Hi-Y Club. Otherwise, he becomes an outcast or an outsider, even while he remains nominally a member. The control exercised by such social pressures makes morals a group function. This is not to deny that a high school boy may "play the game" with a group and thus also put in some bad half-hour sessions afterwards with the violated regulations of his home or church. Or, again through reading and the powers of imagination a boy may become a vicarious member of fancied groups of all sorts or descriptions, even though he lives in the backwoods.

Moral changes take place in the life of a high school boy in peculiar and unconscious ways. He may be hardly aware that he is being drawn astray in a certain respect until the damage is done and he looks back with a sense of failure and remorse. The radical group change from a grammar school setting to that of high school, is the beginning of a

period of careless conduct on the part of many freshmen, which may right itself as the boy gets better adjusted to his new group life.

Verne

In my early high school days my delinquency was due to getting in with the wrong group. My two older brothers were together always, and this left me to drift alone. Then I began to separate the right from the wrong, when I got into the Junior Hi-Y Club.

Martin

If it were not for the Hi-Y Club and its leader, I would have gone to "the dogs" during my early high school days. The chums I had been going with were two-thirds bad. I developed the habit of stealing, and with it went the habit of lying. One fault was backed by another. Then I started breaking habits and forming new ones. Hard! Say, it was the hardest thing in the world. And I had a hard time trying to break one habit! I will not tell what it was just now.

The dates in the materials which follow are inserted to call attention to stages in the process of slipping in moral conduct:

Harold

I don't know whether you know it or not, but I smoke cigarettes, and I have been doing so for the past year. I know all about the harm in smoking for I've heard plenty of lectures on the subject. I know I shouldn't smoke, but I keep on just the same.

Another thing. I was raised so I wouldn't gamble. In fact, I used to consider any form of gambling a sin, and worst of all "crap shooting." I do it myself, though I know every time that I shouldn't. I've shot about six

times since Christmas and I'm going to shoot again if I want to.—April 7th.

At this period, Harold tends to look upon his moral problems as solely a personal matter. If he goes wrong in any respect, it is, in his estimation, due either to some personal weakness, or to perfectly arbitrary surrender to his own wishes. He takes over the entire responsibility for his conduct and makes his defense on that basis.

Harold

I understand myself. I know my weaknesses and I know my assets, too. Everything I do, right or wrong, I consider a part of my education for life. I want to be able to tell my boy what's wrong and what's right, not by just saying so, but by telling him from my own experiences unashamed. I do these things, not for fun, but for experience.—April 19th.

The various twistings and turnings which Harold goes through are not unique to his case. Many high school boys reason about their shady new experiences much after the same fashion. Harold seems to forget that his son may be a chip off the old block and turn around and claim the same right of free experimentation as he claims for himself.

Harold

About a year ago you couldn't show me a girl who couldn't be "necked" by me, if I wanted to. I got a reputation for being fast, and I was. And I never lacked for dates either. This isn't conceit, for many other high school fellows could tell you the same story. Any girl that I go with that will let me put my arm around her

and kiss her, and nine-tenths of them will, is certainly going to be accommodated.

I've gone out on some pretty wild parties and I have gone pretty far. I have almost gone the limit several times with a girl, but I have stopped, because I have a little sense of what is right, I guess. At the psychological moment, I get to thinking of my responsibility and the girl's.—May 26th.

Curiously enough his group relations are charged with no responsibility great or small, as far as his thinking goes, for his adoption of these new ways of conduct. His references to these incidents, for the most part, simply mark the time and place of his own derelictions. At another time he wrote:

Harold

This summer several clubs of young people have been formed for parties at the Beach, a pleasure resort. Each club has a house all their own and we all have season tickets to the near-by dances. I got to running with the bunch, all a good group, except that some of them got drunk at times.—August 20th.

Scarcely a month later:

I am not a lover of liquor. In fact, I don't care for it. If there is anything that disgusts me, it is to see a fellow come to a dance drunk. Until six months ago, I hadn't tasted whiskey. Then I got drunk to see what it was like. I have been "half lit" about two or three times since.—September 16th.

Letters of this type followed throughout the autumn and winter months, leading up to a crisis in which he "went to pieces" emotionally:

I am starting out again, writing about nothing, thinking about lots but unable to impart my feelings, much as I desire to do so. Sometimes I ponder over the question, "Am I worth a damn? What am I? Where am I going?"

I guess I am a little hard to understand at times but what difference does it make anyway? I've wondered if I'm not just a plaything of my desires, living a double life, believing one thing, doing another. To hell with it all! I'll live as my impulses drive me. Let it come out. I guess I'm all bad.

You see I'm crazy. I don't know what I am saying. I say one thing, then contradict it the next moment.—October 10th.

To treat these newly adopted questionable practices as solely a personal matter and in complete isolation from his group life is quite inadequate. On the contrary, the genesis and the tension of the conflict are due to the pulls in opposite directions of his home ideals, his rôle of leadership in the church, in the Hi-Y Club and the DeMolay. Those friends who know Harold only as Secretary of the Sunday school would be greatly disturbed to learn about these escapades, and would be apt to remark, "I can't understand him. He has such a good home." His unrest can be explained more adequately only in the light of the magnetic pull of certain adventurous groups in directions which openly conflict with the moral standards operative in other major groups of which he is a full-fledged member.

The major shift in group relationships, which takes place when a high school graduate goes to college or seeks a permanent job, produces even more opportunities for moral revolutions.

Walter

I received a letter from my sweetheart. She said my mother told her that when boys went away from home their lives changed greatly. This started me to thinking about the smoking habit at the University. This habit is very hard to refrain from when one goes to a Fraternity Smoker. One is quite out of place when everyone else is smoking. In our rooms in the evening so many boys smoke that it is tempting to all those who do not. Dancing is another popular activity for college students. I can't say much about that for I have only been to one or two. My parents never allowed us boys to dance. They are the same about card playing. "It is what it leads to" is all they would say. I differ with them on these things. I know it can lead to bad things, but I'm not afraid.

Frank

It has been quite a time since I have written to you, but I don't think my letters will correspond with what they used to on certain points. A year of work in the mills will harden and change any school boy. While in high school the sex problem was of minor significance to what it is now. Once in awhile we heard older boys talk, but we didn't understand very much. There were theories and stories, but we were only able to piece together bits of conversation we heard.

Then I left school and went to work where the men were ignorant, low and rotten. I worked alongside of these fellows, all sorts of men. It was inevitable that at times our conversation drifted to women. Perhaps I am cursed with an inquisitive imagination. Anyway, I asked questions. At first, I was laughed at, but in time I knew how to act wise.

"Inner voices" representing different groups' moral codes argue back and forth with each other

in the lives of these boys. Here and there we hear of the inspiring story of the boy who stood against the crowd, but the tragedy of the scores who fail is seldom understood and appreciated.

Sex and Youth

Most social groups still refrain from the same frank, open-minded discussion of sex questions as is considered permissable on other topics of equal importance. Extreme standards of continence and silence on the subject prevail in most homes. On the other hand, while boys were not encouraged to write on this subject, still they did so with great frankness and spontaneity.

Narrow attitudes or silence on the subject cannot help but produce reactions of fear, worry, shame, and inferiority in the minds of many boys by no means abnormal. Moreover, the credits and debits rightly chargeable to the experimental work in the line of so-called sex education in the past fifteen years have by no means been accurately measured.

Ralph

I made a decision to live differently about a year ago, after hearing a lecture on sex. I was addicted to masturbation. I decided to "cut it out" but I have not succeeded. I told the lecturer that he could expect a letter from me when I had won a sure victory. I am still struggling. I'll be happy the day I write him.

Alfred

I can't get away from masturbation. I have honestly felt and believed that this is the one thing which keeps me from being a Christian. I succumb to the temptation because I have nothing strong before me to live for. I

have been torn to pieces inwardly over this one problem. The books I read only made me feel more miserable.

The mental turmoil which accompanies this sexual experience is due to a panicky state of ignorance or to false sex notions, frequently traceable to the alarmist language of a certain type of lecturer on the subject, or conservative literature. Too often masturbation has been painted as a major sin, but the best authorities in the field of physiology and psychology are changing their viewpoint in recent years.

Many of the references which occur in the correspondence indicate that the chief problem of these boys on sex questions have to do with the interrelationships of the sexes. Each generation in turn sets up standards of its own for courtship, which depart more or less widely from those of its immediate predecessors. This situation has always led to conflicts often bitter and unyielding between the individuals involved. These divisive bickerings have become increasingly serious at present, because the changes introduced by sons and daughters to-day seem especially radical and risky to their parents and elders. The conduct which goes on at some dances, in the use of the automobile, and at the unchaperoned party has shot to pieces the older set of folkways and moral codes to which these same parents were supposed to live up to in their own youth. It is no wonder, perhaps, that young people grow more and more confused in regard to what standards to follow. In addition, those to which they decide to give their allegiance too often prove to be far more difficult to observe, when the boys are drawn into

the whirlpool of life in their social set, than they anticipated.

Moreover, numerous members of the adult generation, as the boys are not slow to observe, are guilty of behavior not calculated to encourage adherence to very high standards in the relations of the sexes. And when it comes to settling upon ideals, where talk and practice diverge so glaringly, talk is not listened to very respectfully by the younger generation. It is well to remember that although the boys who express their own views here upon this problem belong to the church and the Y. M. C. A. groups, their testimony is by no means uniform.

Henry

Some just take girls out for experience. Some have a different girl every night they go out, and others on alternate days. I know one fellow who goes out with one of his "harem" of questionable girls on Saturday nights, and on Sunday he reforms and takes out a good one. I know I'd boil over, if Ellen went around with a lot of vermin.

If a girl thinks a kiss is the symbol of engagement, or anything like that, why then it is sacred, and the boy is not entitled to it unless she deems it all right. Personally I don't see any vice in kissing. Of course, there is a chance for it to spread venereal disease, but that is very slim. There is nothing sinful in a "petting" party. The only thing it does is to lead on to sexual intercourse.

I think if two young people have sort of a loose friendship, and are not madly in love, that, when a man takes a girl out and spends a lot on her, he should treat her as a companion, not as a slave "bought and paid for." I think the thing he should look for is personality in a

girl. I never got a chance to go far with Ellen, but I imagine if I did, I would never force her beyond her will. If she didn't want me to kiss her, I wouldn't.

John

Do you think a girl has as much respect for a fellow, if he continually wants "a little loving?" Personally it makes me sick to hear the fellows talk like that. I think it is all right to take a girl out, but these "night rides" don't appeal to me. Not many high school boys are that way, I am glad to say. There are several kinds of girls. There is the good kind that everyone admires. There is the kind who don't care what she does. It is this last girl that puzzles me.

Fred

The fellows I go out with are nearly all clean fellows. I have a group who are on the team with me. Once in awhile one of these fellows tells about a good time he has had. At times it is embarrassing to listen to these stories. These individuals who take in these disreputable parties never take the same girl when they go to a respectable one. This gives me concrete proof that the "flapper" is only a toy for these fellows.

A girl who goes out nearly every night with a different fellow and permits petting will lose the spirit of true love. These are the girls that are walking the streets in every city. That is why I believe in refraining from excessive petting and all the other "mushy stuff." Even when a young man meets a girl he truly loves, he should respect her, and the girl should do likewise.

Some boys frequently seek to give a girl a bad name either out of whole cloth or on pretty slender evidence. Others are hard critics of the type of girl with a well-established bad reputation. A marked

reaction against liberties with the opposite sex by some boys is quite common.

Charles

Now there are times when you should take a girl's part—say when she is being run down by a bunch that know nothing about her. Then I say is the time to get your sleeves rolled up.

Harry

At a certain school there was an unusually pretty girl of sixteen. She possessed very high ideals, was athletic, and attractive. For some reason none of the boys at school paid any particular attention to her. One day one of the boys asked her to go out for an automobile ride. When out in the country the boy tried to put his arm around her, but she refused to let him take these liberties. The next week it was all around school, and the universal opinion among the boys was that since the boy was good enough to take her out for a ride, she should have allowed him to take this liberty with her. Only a few fellows defended her.

John

There is certainly a big contrast in the boys at the business college where I am attending now. The boys can "cuss" and say things that don't fit in a decent fellow's life. The girls are very different, too. They put on the most hideous paint and use the cheapest expressions. Most of them are away from home and trying to get an education. Some of the boys boast about how much whiskey they can stand and talk about the girls they have been out with.

Clarence

There are two girls about my age that are very loose mannered. The gang I belong to say they have had

sexual intercourse with them. They asked me why I didn't. I cannot say why, but they did not dress neatly, and I was not used to familiarity with girls. Knowing what they were made them repulsive to me.

No boy wrote about actual experiences with sexual intercourse while still in high school. One of them said:

Harry

I am feeling the desire to start courting a girl in earnest. I want to get a girl in my arms. I want sexual intercourse. Sometimes I wish that I was married.

A year later this same older boy writes:

I won't disgrace any girl just for experience. I'm not willing to take a chance. I can wait. The last thing I would do is to go to a house of prostitution. I want to respect any girl I take out more than I would were I to take advantage of her.

However there are certain factors in modern life which converge to make the problem of the relation of the sexes unduly prominent. There is the period of delayed marriage arising from the high cost of living and the demands for college training. At the same time the movie, the jazz dance, the auto and the "bright lights" accentuate the difficulties of sex restraint. In their perplexing situation it is aggravating to young people to have the gospel of self-control preached to them accompanied by nothing else, and no social institution has any appealing, constructive program or message to offer them. Just how prevalent sexual immorality is among high

school boys and girls has never been determined. The views which the boys express vary, depending on the group to which they belong in this respect.

Frank

There is so much sexual intercourse going on among young people, and the temptation is so great, and the facts so meager that practically all the young fellows I know say they indulge in it. I have a boy friend who considers intercourse as a simple matter where both profit. There is nothing smutty or dirty about it to him. He doesn't tell dirty stories or even refer to other practices. The girl he goes with is from the same church.

Again, how far freedom short of intercourse between the sexes is carried cannot be definitely stated, although four of the boys in this study wrote about such experiences unsolicited. This was during the period following high school and from boys belonging to the industrial group. Here is what Charles has to say as a high school senior:

Charles

Say, here's what I think about the girl who says they have to be "loose." The boys like it, of course. You're right happy they do, but there's two sides to everything. Those kinds of girls like it as well as the boys do. I was with a girl recently who was one of these responsive kind. I asked her if she liked to be loved and she answered with a long drawn out "Um-hum-m-m," very expressive, indeed. Petting came easy for me because I had a good teacher. Of course, I was a willing pupil—who wouldn't be in that case?

How far can one go on a petting party and still be safe? There is a time in the life of older fellows when

they like such things, but they don't have the judgment to figure out the terrible road that these things may lead to. Nevertheless you can't go very far without getting on thin ice. What are my standards? I've never fully figured them out. However, I want to live clean and never wreck a girl's honor, or my own.

The Other Side of the Sex Problem

However numerous the boys who make a bad mess of their relations with the other sex, that is not the full truth concerning the girl question. The good influences exercised by many a girl in the life of a boy presents another and a much more wholesome side of the picture. As soon as a boy of fifteen years begins to comb his hair, shine his shoes, and press his trousers regularly, his parents surmise rightly that there is a girl in the case. These external brushings up, significant as they are, are quite secondary to the sprucing up which may be going on within the boy. He begins to live for someone else than himself, begins to live for a girl on the athletic field, in his classroom work, at church, and elsewhere.

Ray

Most of the other fellows and girls think us very foolish to tie ourselves down in this way, but I have noticed that as a rule the fellows who have no "steady" girl are a wilder bunch. Frequently they have no respect for the opposite sex. They are more apt to drink, smoke and gamble, but I have promised "my better half" that I will do none of these things. I used to smoke, but due to her, I have not smoked for a year. I would not break my promises to her for anything.

Ralph

I felt older because of her love. I felt more mature and more responsible. I hardly knew myself. I still feel that she has made me act older. I never go with girls whom I wouldn't be willing to marry, but now I have a new ideal.

Henry

Of all the girls who are elevating, inspiring, building, Ellen was the one. Whenever I sat in the auditorium with her and talked with her, and realized that I loved her, I had more confidence in myself, because I knew I had someone behind me. I would always plug harder in my school work or in track. And then, there was that hour in the library, when I had a chance to prove that I loved her, that I was clean and wanting her to be her best. It was an inspiration, indeed.

I would want Ellen to teach my children that God was within them, and that they cannot fail in their life ambitions if those ambitions are for the purpose of "laying up treasures in heaven." I know I would succeed with her. I will fight till I do.

Clarence

Should I continue to go with her when my mother feels the way she does, or should I drop her? I think this girl would be a help to any fellow. It is not that I am in love, or anything like that, but I would just like a girl chum to help me travel the "straight and narrow" path. I think that there is nothing so necessary as to have a respectable girl for a chum, so that any time you start to do something wrong, you think of her, or your mother, and that thought saves you.

The expression of such ideals as these boys express is an element of hope in the present complex situa-

tion, and yet, many modern girls would take exception to this element of conservatism. On the other hand, to be effective, these ideals must also be expressed in the conduct of the boys. Too often habit more or less departs from the ideal.

Martin

Many a time I have had a date with the idea of having sexual intercourse but no sooner would the object of my intentions be seated beside me than all my plans melted before my high regard for the girl. I would have nothing but disgust with myself and I sickened at the thought of the whole affair. Often I think I am damn lucky my plans didn't materialize.

I feel the same about necking. To neck a girl for the sake of the excitement—well, I can't see it. But to hold a girl in my arms whom I love—just let anyone call that necking and see what happens.

Some day I am going to have a boy of my own—what a boy he will be! I will want to say to him, as Emerson puts it:

> "Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
> As the swift seasons roll:
> Leave thy low-vaulted past!
> Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
> Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast."

Without a doubt, the minds of high school boys are very naïve. As their experiences with girls increase, they usually change. During high school days, however, a girl friend of the right kind may not only aid a boy to acquire better manners, but also contribute a good deal in other ways to his upbringing. This will not be true, of course, in the

same degree at any rate, if he indulges in escapades with girls of a different stamp.

Factors Which Help Boys to Go Straight

If it were possible to know just what factors are of most assistance in helping a boy to attain and maintain the kind of moral standards which will help him develop a rich, rounded-out personality, then young folks might have their yearnings for intelligent guidance more fully met. One of the best sources from which to seek this information should be the experiences of the boys themselves, as reflected in their own judgments. Upon close inspection six outstanding aids to high morals emerge from these documents, as follows: (1) A generally wholesome environment, (2) Membership in social groups organized for a good purpose, (3) Posts of positive leadership, carrying the responsibility of setting a good example, (4) Activities in common with wholesome possibilities, (5) Inspiration derived from adult encouragement, and, (6) Moral backbone. The numerals below refer to these subdivisions.

John

I think that it was expected of me that I try to do my level best (6). When I do something, I think someone might see me. I mean someone younger than myself (3).

In the military department in school I was made a captain in the cadet corps. So I have a larger number of younger boys under me than most older boys. I have "sat down" on practically all the slang and "cussing" in the company, for I think that the latter will demoralize a group of younger boys sooner than anything. I try to

act as much like an officer and a gentleman as I can (3).

Smoking starts around the gang (1). The other boys think, if one doesn't smoke, he hasn't got the nerve, but I think he has nerve and "guts" not to smoke. I have not started smoking, and I hope I never will start. The fellows will crowd around in a bunch and smoke, but when they see a teacher coming they disperse (5). It is the same way with matching pennies and petty gambling.

In the Hi-Y training camp we discussed some very big problems, such as smoking and gambling (4). We listened to the boys give their own ideas on the questions. The biggest problem, most of us thought, was the swearing at school. Different boys, from the several cities, told how their Hi-Y had met these problems (2). I think I gained some fine ideas that can be carried on in our club this winter.

Ray

Before doing something, often I stop and think and wonder what I should do as a Hi-Y fellow (2). Then I either ease down, or go ahead and do it. I would say that "It is nothing!" and that "Anybody would do the same," or say, "Well, I did nothing wrong. I am just as good as before." Thus, my guiding conscience leads me most of the time (6).

Martin

Did I blush (6) when I heard all of that smut in the locker room! No! Those of us who were at the Older Boys' Conference got together with our leader, and formulated a plan to get rid of it (2). We said to the fellow every time he swore, "Please cut it out," or "Cut the rough stuff." If by chance, he did it the second time, we would keep at him. Simple, yet it worked. We took it slow and easy and let them find that a majority did not like swearing (2).

A little more detail about locker room troubles. The fellows who were in the Hi-Y, and at the same time were in athletics, agreed to help clear things up (2). As we have an important group on the teams, no one of the other fellows said anything to the contrary. Some seniors disagreed a little, but little harm was done from their indifference.

The greatest help in doing this has come from the Hi-Y. Our leader, who has been interested in me, was of untold value (5). He brought to light many things that "the blinding power of sin had diverted my sight from." He brought to me the power of seeing straight (5). Finally, I developed the habit of prayer regularly. It helped greatly. I began to realize, almost too late, the value of my parents (5). Thank God, I was able to discover that, before it was too late.

Yes, I've made progress, but I've a long way to go. I am young and must keep what I have built. But it is easier to keep character when you have it, than to regain it when lost (6). I know that to be a fact.

Walter

I have been a slacker, although I have tried to pass the word on to my fellow students and have been successful in one or two cases (3). I should have done more, but I haven't. I think of the Conference nearly every day, and what I learned about Christian Citizenship (4). I made a speech to-day and brought out several points of the conference. I try to follow the speaker's advice: "Work hard, live clean (5), and have clean associates" (1). I keep it in my mind and try to help other fellow students to do the same (3).

Harry

I have experimented a little with life. The first change I remember was quite a few years ago. We were ex-

changing stories in a trolley car, and the fellow I considered my best friend said he was going to quit telling and listening to them (1). I laughed then, but that night I thought it over, and from then on until now we have established the reputation for being bum listeners to bum stories (6). The "Y.M.," the State Conferences, Camp, The Hi-Y Club and the Church certainly have helped me (4), and when I slip, as I occasionally do, one of them is sure to suggest a new decision and help me back it up. I've decided to live clean and keep my mind and body pure (6), and I want company in it (2).

Charles

You know George Washington, when a boy, once wrote the following words: "Labor to keep alive in your breast, that little spark of celestial fire called conscience" (6). Our conscience has a whole lot to do with our standard of living right or wrong. But it must be developed. Our environment has a monstrous lot to do with the question (1). A street urchin, or a poor soul of the slums may not know right from wrong. He is hungry and he steals. Crime is nothing to be ashamed of to him. It's getting caught that worries him. Now turn it around. The boy from a well-regulated family—one like you and I came from and live in (1). We know right from wrong. Our conscience has been developed (6). I do not look down on a fellow who has standards lower than mine. I do, however, try to persuade him to raise his ideals (3). The same applies to the one who has standards above mine.

1. A Generally Wholesome Environment

Every boy lives and moves and has his being in a social set-up of some kind which may usually be classified as predominantly wholesome or bad. None is entirely free from contamination proceeding from

some quarter of his social compass; none is deprived entirely of incentives to the good life. Handicaps which prove too much for the majority of boys only develop a habit of overcoming in the case of others. Too many advantages prove the ruination of the sons of many a self-made father.

2. Membership in Social Groups Organized for a Good Purpose

Some groups seem to let the maintenance of their ideals and morals take care of itself. It is only seemingly so, however, for closer inspection usually discovers the few members responsible for them. Other groups "seek to create, maintain and extend" specified ideals among their companions and in the activities of the school. This more self-conscious attitude has both its values and drawbacks. It unconsciously forces a boy openly to stand for high morals and to live up to the reputation of his group. But there is always the danger of boys who assume responsibility for the conduct of their associates becoming domineering, officious, and untactful in their methods of procedure. Thus they defeat their own purpose in arousing the antagonism of other boys.

Social pressure of any kind can seldom be ignored; it calls for acquiescence or revolt on the part of the individual. As John recognizes, few boys have the nerve or the "guts" not to smoke, if the gang does so. Ray tells how, even when the group is not present, he stops and thinks of what he should do as a Hi-Y fellow. This living up to what is expected functions not only in relation to group public opinion but also in respect to the desires of parents and

other highly regarded adults. Martin indicates how a few leaders went about it to create the impression that "the majority did not like swearing." Harry says he wants to live the clean life, but he "wants company in it." The boy who "gets in" with the right crowd meets fewer obstacles in the path to success in maintaining high ideals.

3. Posts of Leadership and Responsibility

As long as a boy remains on the side lines he can keep right on picking flaws, if he so chooses, in whatever the management does or decides to undertake. But as soon as he receives an office or a place on the team, he begins to observe and reason, in regard to all matters which come up, from a different standpoint. Make a monitor of the worst-behaved boy in school and he may turn around and become a model of good discipline.

4. Activities in Common

Boys, too, sink under the monotony of daily life into ruts of routine. They need the inspiration and renewal of mind which comes from changes like an experience in camp, at an Older Boys' Conference, and other special occasions. Opportunities to talk with other boys who are similarly situated, to share experiences together, mean much to the boy of high school age. They make him realize that he is not standing alone. This new sense of solidarity gives him strength and power to live his best. Martin says, "I think of the conference every day," and John and Harry also stress the benefit which they received.

5. Inspiration Derived from Adult Encouragement

Some boys go straight of their own accord largely through the friendly contact voluntarily established by them with teachers, Y. M. C. A. secretaries and other group leaders, while other boys are held in line by fear of the consequences should they be caught by certain adults. No boy can avoid being subjected in many, many ways to both these sets of influences. Day in and day out they set him problems of conduct to solve, and his future depends in large measure on how successful he is in these formative spheres in making adjustments proper to his years.

Moral Backbone

Only as a boy builds up moral reserves on which he can draw in emergencies will success in living which can be depended upon be attained by him. When he shows dogged persistence in trying to live up to his expressed desire of doing his best, then there is hope. His parents, teachers, or the friendship of a wholesome leader may "hold a boy in line" for a time, but real success can be the product only of his own moral initiative and persistence. John tells us he is "determined to do his best." Harry says that he has established a reputation and must live up to it. Charles speaks of the importance of a "spark of celestial fire" called "conscience" in his life. Martin puts it this way:

Martin

The decision I made at the conference acts as a resource of power. It is like a great barrier that keeps me

safe from going too far. I treat the every day problems with Divine strength. That is, I leave it all for me to decide by, "What would Jesus do?"

Morals and Personality

Morals are personality in action, action possessing a qualitative element of great significance. For instance, the exercise of moral ascendency required to captain a football team means as much to the growth of the captain's personality as the daily practice does to his playing skill. If he stands for fair play and clean sportsmanship, he can set the tone for the whole squad. It is safe to count on the ability of the superior type of high school boys to cope with moral issues of their own group successfully. First, the places of prominence, relatively speaking, won by them shield them appreciably from careless surrender to many customary temptations. Then, too, their time is all taken up with wholesome activities. Finally, these relatively more gifted personalities are more apt to think through the various kinds of disturbing situations which arise and thus to reach saner solutions to their moral perplexities.

Ray

The bunch that I go with, or that I know, do not smoke, as a rule. Sometimes one or two do, but for athletic reasons and Hi-Y standards, it does not go. Personally, I have no desire for it. As for cards, yes, but not gambling. True, some smutty stories get around, and some swearing, mostly temper. We go to church because we want to and like it. As for late hours, it is, of course, opposed at home.

Walter

The girls in our school made a pledge not to carry on any petting parties, and I told all the boys in the dressing room that my girl would keep her pledge. They laughed at me, but I didn't care, because my conscience was clear. Some of the boys said that if theirs did, they would quit them.

There are occasions when even the best boys slip. The reaction on the personality of the boy depends on how seriously he takes the mistake and how long the way of error is continued.

Clarence

All of my boy friends seem to be getting "girl crazy" but me. If it wasn't for my boy friends, I wouldn't even have gone with Mary or flirted with them in the show. Recently, I called on one of the bunch and we made arrangements to go to a show. We didn't say just where, but when we got down town, he said, "How about a snappy burlesque?" I looked at him, laughed, and said, "Come on, stop your fooling." But he meant it. I had never been to such a show before and it sounded so adventurous that I consented.

Verne

I've always had some kind of a chum throughout my life. If we moved, I always would find a playmate. Now I regret some of the fellows I have chummed with. As a junior in high school, I got in pretty thick with a fellow named "Jimmie." I knew he would lead me wrong, but somehow I didn't have the courage to throw him. He got in a fight at home, wanted to run away, and finally, he got me to go with him. We ran away twice, but I always bummed rides back home.

Leonard

If you're not a leader already, why try to be one? If one of my friends is a leader, and I think he is, why I wish to be as far from a leader as I can. All the older folks like him, and admire him, but "the kids"—gee, what we've seen him do. He copies, cheats, and does lots of bad things when older people don't see. The boys are "wise" to him, but the Camp Director has chosen him for a leader. He has a line of big talk and a boastful air about him. That is the way he gets things.

This divided state of mind is most perplexing to some high school boys. They feel that "they are not sincere," that they are shams. They are "on the fence," torn by an inward demand that they choose once for all between the two forces battling within their souls for supremacy. Some boys never snap out of this dual life. They drift along making the same mistakes and then making the same old excuses for the mistakes. In other boys one or the other wins out and the personality of the boy becomes reintegrated.

In conclusion, it is important to recognize the harm which may be done by constant talk to boys about too high ideals. Many of them take this kind of idealistic talk from their teachers too seriously.[2] They actually try to give life on this angelic plane a tryout during adolescent years. Should such a boy be patted on the back, and held up as a model? In other words, do we want boys to attempt the impossible and lose their grip when inevitable failure

[2] See the quotation from Harry, p. 230.

occurs? Or, should boys be permitted to remain human in their conversations, attitudes toward girls, and group relationships? Just where should parents, teachers and leaders of boys draw the line?

CHAPTER VIII

BOY RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

THE religious training received during childhood, both at home and in the church, cannot help but carry over to some extent and make itself felt in the practices and thinking of many high school boys. A boy raised in an orthodox home and church, and there taught with some degree of exactness just what to believe, will be apt to continue taking these ideas for granted during his early high school experience. In a community, fairly homogeneous, there is little likelihood that contrary viewpoints which would disturb his thinking will have come to his attention. Even should he read about evolution by chance, or run into someone who challenges his views, he will say as he looks back over his twelve to fifteen years, "What's good enough for father is good enough for me." Thus it is that most boys grow up conservatives in their theological concepts of religion.

High school boys in this group pretty generally are awake to the grip which childhood religious influences have upon them.

John

For the last five years I have not missed a Sunday going to church, except when I have been sick or out of

town. Then I go where I am, if possible. The thing that brought me up in the church was my father. Dad has been an active church worker always. At present he is the teacher of a very large Men's Bible class.

Although he said that his father never talked with him about religion, he once wrote:

John

In a letter from my father, he said recently, "I've never talked to you about religion very much, as you seem to have a definite sense of your own about it. I think you know, however, that to my way of thinking the only life worth living is one tied up positively with the life of Christ. To know His will and to do it makes for a peace which nothing can destroy. A man can afford to stand a lot of ridicule if he knows he is right. That is what makes a fellow keep 'hitting the ball.'"

Fred

Some boys do not value religion, because they are not taught it from youth on; others, because they don't get enough. We ought to have more of it in our schools. How much do most young people get? One lesson, and that's on Sunday. That's why they don't know the essentials of religion and do not value it.

I know a boy who has been impatient with the church. No one could argue with him. Things weren't going his way, so he took a notion to quit the church. He may change to some other church, perhaps, but the chances are that he will drift along outside of the church entirely. I say that a boy should not leave his church because of some small conflict.

The views of these two boys will be more fully understood if the reader recalls that John comes

from a Southern fundamentalist home, church, and community, while Fred is a very loyal Catholic. The next two boys, Henry and Martin, have a definite religious experience to relate, even though their contacts with the church during boyhood have been limited in scope.

Henry

I never went to Sunday school in my younger days, so I had no accurate conception of the church. It was not until I was fifteen years old, when I joined and became an active member, that I began to think about the nature and value of religion.

I have always tried to live clean, honest, and moral, and I have succeeded so far. I have never practised masturbation very much and always discouraged bad things among the fellows. I have established a creed of brotherhood among men, always trying to treat others fairly, and to be friendly with them. I have always played square and gained a reputation for such.

Martin

The church is another thing altogether. Why did it hold no attraction for me and not have my sympathy? For one thing, I have been separated from the church ever since I was a lad of ten, because there was no church of our denomination where we moved. Then, too, I did not admire its members, teachers, and minister. Furthermore, there were too many divisions and sects among the churches.

Later, Martin returns to the subject and indicates something of the nature of his thinking on religion:

Martin

Why is it that religion has such a powerful grip on us?

Is it because of our many years of indoctrination? Anyway, when we have been negligent of our relations with God, and a sudden crisis occurs, we take to our religion like "a duck to water."

If I were brought up to believe that my mind was all powerful, when I meditate on trouble or danger, that my mind would carry me through, would not that take the place of faith in God? Don't think that I have suddenly become "loony" and want to start a new religion. However, I cannot help but feel that my religion has been the product of my environment.

In contrast, some high school boys' religion seems to be a matter of what to do about playing baseball or going to shows on Sunday.

Verne

I have a Sunday school class now, a group of nine-year-olds. They are very interesting. If you give a story to illustrate a point, they will make sure to ask if it is true or not. If you say, "No," then they will tell their parents. If you say "Yes," they say you're fibbing.

Besides teaching Sunday school, I've been doing a little charity work, donating to the Police Fund. The other day, I was rushing down the boulevard, when an officer stopped me. At the police station, they said, "$28.41"—not many words, but a lot of meaning. Soon I'll own the jail. Don't ask me how I feel, I can't describe it. I got busy to try and get out of it, but none of my friends could help me have the ticket taken care of.

The characteristic which appears to be most prevalent in the thinking of high school boys, on the subject of religion, is a sense of vagueness and uncertainty. Even when they give expression to positive

views, they turn around and indicate plainly that their minds are not fully made up.

Outgrowing Childhood Religion

As their mental development proceeds it would be surprising if high school boys did not begin to do a little thinking on the moot points of religion, even those who do not go so far as to become openly critical.

At first, however, the average high school boy when challenged comes to the defense of the brand of religion he has been taught and uses all his intelligence to argue in its behalf. Fred displays this attitude in much of his materials. John has a tendency to take the value of religion for granted. Ray, Verne, and Harold, all boys from fine religious homes, and active in church work, give an insight into the beginnings of doubt in the minds of the type of boys who will want to reason and figure things out for themselves as they get older. The religious attitudes and concepts of their childhood have become inadequate, and yet they are unable to replace them with something better. This period of perplexity exerts a most disorganizing effect psychologically upon a boy's personality.

Harold

Some people are human beings and don't realize it. They just go on living in "a matter of fact" way, doing no special harm, and certainly no special good. Finally, they die, after having lived a long time. They accomplish nothing and are a complete failure in my estimation.

In my life, I have something to live for. After each

step is taken, something to strive higher for appears. But there is something that has been troubling me for the past four months. I can't understand the Bible. And then, too, why will God let the persons who have committed wrongdoings go—punishing the good ones and leaving the wrongdoers live here on earth in peace. Maybe not peace of mind, but unhindered, just the same. Why is God thus?

I am not complaining, but I am trying to understand. I have always thought that I would bear it with a smile, if some misfortune should befall me, such as blindness. But it would be hard. And I would not understand it at all. Why doesn't God in all His power make this world good? He has the power and loves everyone of us. If He sees us going wrong, why does He let us go our way unhindered?

Now, shoulder to shoulder, I believe in prayer. I have passed in school lots of times on account of prayer. Many things I have prayed for have come true. I pray every day. If I am at work, I may be walking along, and pray. It is just plain praying for people who are not blessed as you and me, praying for myself and my family.

And do you know, I wonder at times if it is fear that makes me do it. Am I doing it because I am afraid that I will not go to heaven? I answer, "No," and yet, I am afraid that has a little to do with it. Do you think that if a person does right, just to keep from going to hell, that he will be rewarded? Another thing, do you believe that a person goes right to heaven, or is it just like going to sleep? Why is it God says on the Judgment Day that every person will be tempted by Jezebel, who will be lying on a cot?

Now there are times when I see things clearly and understand them well, but a little later on, I am right back in the same old rut, striving to get out. There is

no peace of mind for me in living the way I am now doing.

Verne

My brother is not so running over with religion that he goes to church, but he believes that there is a Creator. Still, I believe he will have a good chance to get to heaven. A cup of water can quench your thirst without having it overflowing. Of course, a cup may have just a little bit of water in it and not quench your thirst. A person with a little religion may not get into heaven, but you can get one-half full and still get in.

These boys from conservative religious homes are seeking answers to questions concerning religion, which may bring them into conflict with their parents or elders.

Charles

My idea of religion is looking up to someone higher than myself. There are many different kinds of religion, and Christianity is the one which gives us the highest idea of personality. I fear that my conception of God is pretty vague. I know that He "made man in His own image," so He must look like a man. I know that He "doth mark the sparrow's fall," so He must be very great indeed. But will you tell me about the "Divine Conception"? I've heard about it, but I don't understand.

Did you ever read any of Ingersoll's writings? Some of it sounds pretty logical to me. Sometimes I am in doubt regarding the Bible. I used to believe that the Bible was given us as dictated directly by God, but now I find that it is a legend, handed down from one generation to another, until someone copied down the fragments. When I put two and two together, I wonder if all

the Bible is there. I am going to be bold here. Do you believe all of the Bible?

The Lord did not say in Genesis how long the days and nights were. They may have been centuries for all we know. Anyway, I wouldn't feel ashamed, if I knew that we did spring from monkeys. If the Lord made us that way, it would not bother me. I don't believe that, of course, but it could be so. You know I think about such stuff all the time. I read the Bible and believe it and disbelieve all else I've heard. Then, when I read Ingersoll, I turn my belief around. In fact, I don't know what I believe.

My father gets very angry when I mention things like this, and sometimes he says, "For Heaven's sake, I hope you don't mention this outside the family and show your ignorance."

The next document emphasizes the disorganizing effects of religious conflict. In this case, it is the result of dropping the Catholic faith, and undergoing the process of readjustment which was necessary.

James

My ancestors have all been brought up in the Catholic religion. But my mother did not like the Catholic idea of worship, so she let us go to a near-by Congregational church.

When I was just a little fellow, I went to Sunday school always and believed what the teacher told me. But when I was about fifteen years old, my mind started questioning the miracles. I pray every night, but how am I to know if He will answer my prayers or not? Maybe I pray just because it is a habit, or a handed down custom, or because I think it may do me some good. Nevertheless, if someone could prove to me that prayers do come true, I would not have a doubt in my

mind. And how are people to know that the Bible is true?

Religion, in itself, is all right, but sometimes people make fools out of themselves by carrying it to extremes. Recently, I read in a newspaper about a group of people who predicted the end of the world was near. Two weeks before, they sold all their belongings, climbed a near-by mountain, and there they kept praying, saying that God would destroy everything and everybody except them. Of course, they were crazy.

Now let us turn to the Catholic church. The members have to give so much money, in order to live up to the ideals of the church. The priest says the money is for God's work, when everybody should know that it is just a scheme for raising money to keep the priest and the church going. Then, who is the priest that people should confess their sins to him. To me it is one of the most ridiculous religions there are. I think it develops in the people narrow-mindedness, unless a person is of a very high caliber.

An attack of this kind on church practices, religious personalities. and the Bible by a high school junior would be regarded by many religious workers as most disturbing. James seems to have passed beyond a state of perplexity on religious matters to an attitude of positive doubt and antagonism. He still recognizes, however, that religion is of value, but it must be made reasonable before he will accept it. James would have us understand that he is against the kind of religion which makes people narrow-minded.

The unfavorable reaction of other boys to religion is partially due to being forced to go to church.

Adolph

I went to church largely because I was commanded to. There was little or no chance to assume any responsibility. I could not see why it was not better to go into the woods for a walk, than to stay in a stuffy little church and listen to all this rigmarole.

The influence of the church was small. Ours was a small church and very few young people attended. The whole atmosphere was not inviting to me. It was tiresome to listen to a dreary bunch of hymns and stereotyped prayers which meant nothing to me, and a sermon, which either did not apply to present day things, or was a scolding sermon about the laxity of the day.

The inward conflicts engendered by religion between what a boy tells himself he ought to do with life and what he actually does do, are described by Alfred.

Alfred

My evil nature came out in going to burlesque shows, and then, when I masturbated, I would curse the day I was born and hate myself. I would go to Sunday school, as well as attend morning and night services at church. I would agree with the preacher that I was hopelessly born a sinner, and sometimes, I would cry in church. I thought that only Christ could save me, and that night and the next few nights, I would pray that I might be good. For a few days I would be all right, then toward the end of the week I felt mean and had sex imaginations again. By Saturday night I would go to a burlesque show again.

Strange as it is, my sex life interwove itself with my religious life. Of the two combatants, sex said, "Do that," and religion said, "You can't do that." One man

in me, the baser one, got the best of the fight toward the end of the week. Then, the other man in me got the best of it on Sunday and Monday. I don't know where my will power was during this eternal, never ending conflict. Sometimes I felt weak and sneaky, like a crook, and on Sunday I felt like an angel. Christ was merciful and always willing to forgive me. Then I felt good.

I developed a religion to combat sin. This is how I got started going to church, except when sent by my mother as a little child. I never missed a Sunday. I believed in every word in the Bible. I believed in every sacrament, and what the minister said. I thought I had found the way to please God. I believed that God liked me better than anybody in the world, that I was a marked man like Jeremiah, the prophet.

Religious Readjustment

It is unlikely that a boy of average intelligence will remain untroubled by those enigmas of the divided mind and so altogether free of the need of making some readjustments in his religious thinking as he grows older. As a result, many no doubt become indifferent or antagonistic to religion in the end. A large number think and work their way into revised conceptions of religion to which they can give full allegiance. And some of the more susceptible to scientific or materialistic considerations substitute for their childhood religion a cold, calculating, rational view of life.

Two sets of data are given below to show rather definitely the direction taken in the process of reorganization.

Frank

I usually went to church and selected my friends to

please myself. Sometimes, I was warned to keep away from certain boys, but I was never told outright to stay away from them. I went to at least four different church denominations before I landed at the Methodist church. However, the church has had very little influence in my life. I always believed that there was a Supreme Being, but sometimes it grew difficult to believe some of the miracles in the Bible. I don't believe in the Biblical theory of the creation.

My religious experiences were scarce, but I have done plenty of thinking on the subject. First, I don't believe that God wrote the Bible, except insofar as he inspired the individuals who did the writing. Second, I believe that it was intended as a book of advice, to be used as a reference book, and to be studied the same as any other book. Third, I don't believe it can be absolutely true, word for word, for it has been translated from a foreign tongue, and it was probably only a collection of stories in the first place. Then when the monks translated it into English they could easily have changed it, even though unintentionally.

As far as heaven and hell are concerned, I don't believe they are material. Maybe we are punished for our misdeeds, and maybe we aren't. If God created man and the worm from the same stuff, then why wouldn't the worm go to hell too? I have never heard of a zoölogist telling how a worm will go to heaven for living a fine life. Our higher intellect and knowledge is no excuse for scaring us with purgatory, because the fish is as high over the worm as we are over the fish. Also, after a man has lived a bad life on earth, what good is it to that earth for him to go to hell? How in the world can the people he has wronged be recompensed by his burning? Perhaps, after he has been punished, he returns to earth to start over again and profit by his punishment. This would be more in accordance with the "conservation of energy" idea, because if we were all destroyed, then very

soon no people or souls would inhabit the earth, and we would be bones and flesh walking around without a soul. There has to be a circulation of the souls in order that "none may be created or destroyed." Then if a soul was bad the first time it inhabited the earth, it would profit by its punishment. The good souls would return to live an easier life. Then, finally, the earth would all be inhabited by good people, which would sound better than saying that the day will come when the earth will end, and all the bad people will go to hell.

I don't say that the religion of other folks is wrong just because mine doesn't agree with theirs. If they can live a good life with their standards of God, etc., then why shouldn't I be able to live just as good a life with mine?

I began thinking along these lines when I was fourteen years old. It did not come all at once. I changed from one church to another, and heard each religion. I began to think that if all the present religions were going to bring all of these people to heaven, then one more brand on the market wouldn't do any harm. About this time I began to study elementary science and saw that science and the Bible didn't agree on certain points. I asked several Sunday school teachers about this. They all "beat around the bush" and appeared shocked that I should question the Bible. That made me suspicious, and I started to find out answers to my questions elsewhere.

At times I am almost afraid that possibly I have made a mistake in thinking as I do, but at these times no better solution comes to my mind, so I believe the Lord wants these ideas to stay in my mind, especially, if they are nearer the truth than my older ideas. My religion, if judged by a minister or priest, is enough to confine me to hell for the rest of eternity.

George

The facts of life are so simple; the principles of theology so complex. Life is so clear; theology so confusing to me. Truly one who teaches religion is a blind guide to offer theology as a substitute for science. Because we do not know everything, is no excuse to abandon all we know for something which is not based on facts.

Just see how vicious is the theology of St. Paul. He teaches that man is born in sin; that he cannot help but sin; and that his only hope is to obtain forgiveness and mercy. Is there any more effective theory for spreading crime than such a doctrine? Why not teach the simple scientific fact that a man's character depends on his environment, and that he can do right, if surrounded by the right environment.

A few Sundays ago, I attended a church service at the invitation of a friend. When it was over, I thought to myself, "And this all started when Moses tried to teach the Jews how best to live. Now after all these years, they are preparing men, not for life but for death." A strain of tragedy seemed to run through the whole thing. Even a hymn telling of God's mercy and justice was sung to a tune slow and spiritless. Another thing which I disliked very much was the constant and artificial way in which the worshipers humbled themselves before their God. If I were that God, and men came humbling themselves that way, I would send them to hell from pure disgust at such creatures who crawl in the dust to beg what they refuse to earn honestly. The private who does his best, surely is equal to the general who does his best. Why should the private lie in the dust every time the general is mentioned? It is this kind of theology which hinders progress. It makes a door mat out of useful creatures.

Not long ago, I was contemplating entering the Y. M. C. A. Secretaryship. But no, not for me! It will

be a long time before the Y. M. C. A. is entirely free from this vicious theology.

Science is far from explaining everything, but it already furnishes a solid foundation upon which to build a dwelling. Let me, then, explain my dwelling as it stands to-day. The foundation is what I know, scientifically tested. The walls are what I have good reason to believe. The roof is an arbitrary arrangement, made by myself from personal standards. I base it on what we call common sense. It may be one thing to-day, another thing to-morrow.

For example: I know that all my movements are induced by the conditions which surround me. I know that my character is the product of my environment, that every thought and action is a practically mechanical response to the things that go on about me. I am not tempted to end my existence, because the same facts show me that I will gain nothing by so doing. I know that conditions are every day arising that threaten the survival of the human race, but science offers the best mode of solving any, or all of these problems.

I have good reason to believe that there is nothing after death. Furthermore, I am pretty sure that there is little likelihood that God is anything like what theology describes.

With views of this type, I can live my life without fear of death, pain, or inconvenience. By occupying myself with an all-consuming interest, I can make life seemingly more enjoyable and attractive. Let that interest be the continuance and happiness of the human race, through the advancement of science.

The knowledge that thoughts like these are running through the minds of certain boys might cause considerable consternation among many church folks. It may be helpful to evaluate the religious

attitudes of all the boys under study, on the basis of questions like these:

1. What effects are the ideas expressed in each case likely to have on their personal attitudes and habits of living?
2. What influences are their viewpoints likely to exert on their social interests?
3. To what extent have these boys reached settlements which will be permanently satisfactory? To what extent can they be given additional direction?
4. Which boys possess the poorest conception of religion? Which the most wholesome?

Although the commonest criterion which most people apply to determine whether a person is religious is his record in regard to church attendance, a boy may go to church regularly, as a matter of fact, and even perform some service in its behalf, without acquiring very vital religious experiences. One boy writes:

I wish that you would ask some fellows besides myself to write on their moral attitudes and how much they've been influenced by the church. I cannot deny that church attendance has had an effect upon my life. In fact, of all the things in which I have become interested, I believe that the church has influenced me for the better more than anything else. I do believe also, that my code of morals would be just as high without the church attendance. I think that the church attendance has impressed upon me the fact that I must maintain this high code of morals.

I can produce proof that it is not absolutely necessary to attend church in order to maintain morals of a high

standard. For this proof I look to a friend, an officer in our Hi-Y Club.

At this point you may say that the Hi-Y organization has influenced him. If it has, good for the Hi-Y Club, but I have known this fellow for the last eight years and upon my honor I state that he, four years ago, had as high a standard of morals as any fellow of his age could have. This was before entrance into high school and since then he has maintained them.

I feel that mine are no better than his. He has not attended church or Sunday school; I have attended both. He is an officer in our Hi-Y Club, so am I. There is also the other extreme, and I can cite instances, where all the church going in the world did not effect the fellow's conduct.[1]

Not until a boy has thought things out to his own satisfaction and attached himself spontaneously and with enthusiasm to it, as to a great cause, does religion come to possess the significance to which it is entitled in his life and over his personality. This experience is possible during the high school period. High school boys are asking searching questions on such subjects as the nature of God, the infallibility of the Bible, the miracles, the purpose and value of prayer, and similar problems. They are challenging the old demands for unquestioned obedience, the dogmatic positions of religious conservatives, and the right of their parents or other adults to coerce them into line. On the other hand they are eager to join adults, who do not seek to dominate their thinking, in quest of the truth in regard to religion.

Religious Experiences of High School Boys

As presented by certain of the boys themselves,

[1] Document No. 7.

the sources and seasons of their inner awareness and sense of the presence of God center in (1) Their church experience, (2) Critical personal situations, (3) Contacts with nature, and (4) Intellectual adjustments.

The church experiences of most boys make a definite contribution to their religious consciousness. There is a distinct difference, however, between the effects of church attendance and activity done from a sense of duty, and that based upon real devotion and a willingness to contribute to the religious life of the church.

Harry

I remember well how my interest in Sunday school waned, or was enthused by the teacher we had. I was always at Sunday school though, because I was made to feel that my attendance at Sunday school was just as important as it was at public school. It grew to be a habit. I attended regularly until last year, when I found it rather hard to get up in time to attend. Now, however, I am going regularly and am very interested in the problems we are studying, about the life of Christ. I have been an usher in church since I joined three years ago. When I first entered Sunday school, I used to think that God was some vague and far-off person, and that He watched all our movements from afar off. Now, although I don't see all these things perfectly clear, I have advanced a great deal in my religious thinking.

Walter

Religion is the best influence for good that I know of. To reach the ones who need it the most, one must go about it in a way which is interesting to them. I believe the Hi-Y is a good way. After being at a Boys' Conference such as I attended, how could one help but have a

better feeling? After listening to the many speeches that we had the honor of hearing, it was enough to change one's heart toward his fellow men. I am sorry that every boy in our school could not have heard them. It would have made all of us better.

Second, and perhaps of more significance, are the critical personal situations which arise in the early experiences of high school boys. These situations call out all a boy's reserves in his search for a solution. Credit is given to God for the arrival of the reinforcements which at these times relieve anxiety, and enable the boy to go ahead again with confidence.

Henry

In all my troubles there was one thing I did hold onto, however; that was faith in God and the Son. I felt that however hard my troubles were, the Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Omniscient Being was forever with me and would guide my mind. I conscientiously prayed to Him to help me out of my trouble. I was confident that my prayer would be answered, but I decided that I must help myself. I sat down and began to think. What was causing this terrible procedure? What is at the root of this awful snag? Light then came to my mind. I was too easily satisfied with myself. My mediocre school work pleased me. My athletics were well done. I played the piano wonderfully—in my estimation. I became "hot" over this. I decided that I had made the same foolish mistake that many boys had made, and I had fallen into a deep rut. I took my sword and began to combat this monster. I told myself that I was too liberal with myself, that I did not think enough. I decided then to check up on myself every day, to criticize myself freely, and to try to regain some of the friendships I had

lost. I also felt a desire to stay out for athletics, and train myself for the next year.

That was my solution. After I had meditated about it, I tried to carry it out. I was warm and hearty to my friends and teachers. I did more for other people than I did for myself. I used my will power to concentrate on my studies, and worked with everything I had in athletics. All this time, I did not forget Him who helped me out of this difficulty. I joined the church, and was elected treasurer of my class in Sunday school. Every night I thanked Him for His kind help. During the summer, I went out to camp in order to test myself. I met with very good results there.

Walter

I have been interested a great deal in athletics for the past year. I won a tennis cup for which I do not really attribute the honor of winning to myself or my fellow teammate. I know God was present, for I had prayed for strength and power to help me. And with every point in my last "set," which was won by a very small margin, a prayer was breathed. I played football for my first time this year. It is my senior year, and I had a desire to make good. I put out all the strength I had, and with the help of a much higher Being I succeeded in making good. I ended upon the All-Star eleven picked by the coaches.

Fred

Things that I do are based on religion. For instance, if I take a girl home, my religion tells me to be a man. I went to a boy whom I knew quite well, and asked him if he thought of religion when he tried to take advantage of a girl. His reply was "No." I was surprised, because I know when I did minor things with girls, not

trying to lead to large ones, I felt something sticking me; it was religion.

We need religion in order to know the difference between good and evil, and also to tell us how to live a life in which we may succeed. I hold religion as one of the highest elements in life. It is my guide. I think when I do wrong, and then try and see if I can correct myself. That is because I am afraid God may punish me for my evil doings. Why do them, if we know that an after-effect is waiting?

In the third place, boys may find God in nature. In such cases, the religious experience is usually described as a feeling of the spirit leaving the body and attaching itself to or communicating with an exterior supernatural power. The boy is identifying himself with nature, God, the Eternal. To distinguish it from "inspiration," Horace M. Kallen calls this "ecstasy."

God. Yes, God is all around here. Every tree, every rock, every hill, every creature is His work, untouched by man. You fight His blizzards, breathe His air, and bask in His sunshine. How can one's life be anyone's but God's. In the city where one is blinded, confused by the many surface values, how can God's hand show? Only through people, and they have always seemed to me to be his poorest, and yet, greatest creation. We can be His greatest but most of us turn out by far the poorest. What is God? To me God is in everything beautiful and good. What matters it so long as it is beautiful—a kind word or deed, a tree, a sunset, or a wild creature? All that is truly ugly is man's work. A rock? Look at it closely. It is steadfast, rugged, and truly wonderful in its way. It's no use, I cannot describe His work.[2]

[2] Document No. 8.

In the fight that every boy has as he grows older, whether the Story of God will stand the test of his growing power of logic, I think that he should be taught to separate God from the Church, not accept Him as a certain sect set out or to have his God covered with man-made trappings. Seeing the state in which the various Churches fall sometimes, is it to be wondered that a boy turns round and says he has no belief? God is more than the Churches and sects, the only basis on which a man has to found his life, the only key to the reason of our existence.

God is sometimes what to me is beyond definition. Churches, sects, religions are all man-made monopolies. When I see a river coming through the fields or stand on the seashore and look at the unmeasurable might of the waters—that is like my God. It does things that men do not understand, they call it phenomena. With knowledge they sometimes understand. Is not our God like that? Yet men go down to the water and fill a bottle, this they say is God, and yet the water in the bottle is dead. It no longer has its power, might, majesty, it is merely a flat colorless liquid. And other men come and fill a different shaped bottle and say, "Here is God in His temple," the result is the same. That to me, is the relation between God and the Churches.[3]

This spiritual conception of life, all life, and a sense of identity or harmony with all the universe has a significant influence on the personality of the high school boy who experiences it. It gives a sense of depth, expansion, and power to him as he identifies his life with the universal—the Ultimate—with God. The emotional tone of this experience may be described as a sense of "oneness" and "unity"

[3] Document No. 12.

with all his surroundings—natural, human, and divine.

Finally, and most apparent of all as a source of the inner awareness and sense of the presence of God, as has already been described from the conflict point of view, are the intellectual maneuvers epidemic in adolescence. It is a fact that certain religious problems which did not arise among young men until their college days are now presenting themselves to the minds of the more thoughtful older high school boys. These young men are forming the acquaintance of the scientific attitude, which encourages unbiased investigation of any or all phases of life. It is quite true that pure science is not concerned with religion, but with understanding processes, techniques, methods, *means,* while religion occupies itself with values, purposes, goals in life, *ends.* Some of the boys seem to be making adjustments between religion and science which are worth special consideration.

When these inward conflicts near the point of desperation, these boys who feel hemmed in on all sides break through by a supreme act of faith that God has come to their aid with fresh assurance of His providential care.

Concerning God, I think if a fear was not born in me and I was only influenced by science, I would be an unbeliever. But man's creation out of his fear of doing wrong and being punished by God is inborn in me, and so I dare not desert. On the death of a dear one recently, I asked myself, "What is God?" I got just so far in my answer and then all became a muddle. It's too huge.[4]

[4] Document No. 19.

Ray

My experience is that science reveals God and His great works. I cannot see how anybody can get a real appreciation and understanding of life, if they do not delve into physics, biology and the sciences.

As for religion, I believe in Christ and his teachings, and can see no reason why the idea of the evolution of man, as Darwin and other scientists believe, should interfere with the teachings of the Bible. I can't quite see this Darwin theory myself, but I can understand their reasons for believing it. A professor from California spoke at the State Sunday School Convention this fall. He gave a good talk on the Bible and the evolution theory. I cannot recall all of his points, but he told us that the Bible was not a book in which to study science and that Darwin's book was not a Bible. The professor gave "some" talk. He certainly started things going for me. He was rather radical and overran most of the ideas that I was brought up on, but I would like to hear him again on the same subject.

Henry

Last Sunday, we were discussing evolution at Christian Endeavor, and when we were walking home, one of the fellows remarked that the pastor was not so broad minded as he might be. I told him that it was not his place to be broad minded on the subject of evolution, because evolution is a detriment to Christian faith. It was the preacher's business to fight against it. I don't know how the fellows took that, but I believe they changed their opinion.

Harry

I believe that there is a reward for everyone after this life, and that each person earns his own reward here on this earth. If we are to die and pass forever from all

existence, why do we work so hard to go right, and why do we have a conscience to tell us that this is right, and this is wrong? And, why does right overpower and rule this universe rather than wrong? Why is it that people are very calm before their death, and seem to feel that everything will be all right? It is because there is a Master ruling here, and when He sees fit to have us leave or to have us do certain things, He determines what is to happen.

I have often thought of the after-life, as it is called by some, and I have invented many possible solutions, but none are entirely satisfying. Perhaps this may be the first of a series of similar places, and that, when we are transferred, we receive such things and stations as we have shown ourselves capable of handling. This problem has given me more thought than any other religious problem, and I have been searching for a satisfactory answer ever since I started to think about it.

There is another old custom I dislike; that of calling Christ and God "kings," because after all, don't we elect our president? I don't think we should hold anything against a man because he calls the Supreme Power by a different name than the one we are used to hearing. The point is that at least he realizes that there is such a Power and he worships it. Then, too, even though I read in the Bible that God created man after his own image, I cannot (yet) conceive of anyone or any spirit that is omnipresent and still like us unless we be created after Him in spirit only; which seems most likely. It doesn't take much observation to see that there must be some superior power but to conceive Him is another thing.

It would be a great mistake to assume that all of the religious experiences of high school boys centered at the above points. The fields of art, music, drama, ritual, or ceremony raise questions, also, which turn

out to be fruitful in spiritual possibilities. Too many workers with boys confine their attention and efforts in this respect too narrowly to Bible study and moralizing.

Not infrequently by his own testimony, a boy will feel inspired to "put his soul" into athletics, music or some other avenue of action than those commonly classed as distinctively religious. Likewise, many a boy in his simple daily experiences has devoted his boyish efforts to making his home, school, church or community more in harmony with the ideals of religion.

The Present and the Future

A little over five years have passed since this investigation was undertaken. Many changes have gone on in the lives of these boys, positive in some cases, negative in others, but in every case bearing a definite relation to his ideals and religious background. This makes it possible to detect a somewhat permanent trend or "psycho-social set" in their various personalities. In fact, in certain instances, it is possible to make definite predictions regarding their future.

Ralph, Henry, John and Fred who are now in college are active leaders in the Christian organizations on the campus. Vocationally, Ralph and Fred are interested in social service, Henry in journalism, and John in medicine. Donald died while still a freshman in college, but it is safe to predict that he would have continued to be a representative of the more quiet type of leader, standing for positive Christian ideals.

Ralph

To give all I can give; all that I have to give; to help boys; that is honestly why I live. But I study and try to learn, and seek a college education, that I might know how to best give what I have. I never had a thought in mind as to a reward in heaven, till I asked a boy what he lived for, and even now, heaven or eternal life doesn't enter in at all. No reward does.

Fred

I had established a reputation that I was proud of. I wanted to make it a topnotcher. After ten months of toil, I may freely say I have accomplished what I set out for, by ending my high school career with honors, not only in activities, but in my studies as well. In my last year it was my wish and desire to do something bigger and better than I have done in previous years, and with this aim, I finished in fine shape. Gee, it was a pleasure to climb, even though I often met a knock. Many a day did I wish that there were forty-eight hours instead of twenty-four. I want to direct my ambitions so as to contribute my mite to society by developing myself toward higher, broader and nobler living. In short, I am trying to live right, and in this way prepare for "the great beyond."

While Harry continues to be an excellent student, an outstanding leader on the campus, a change has come over him, in the past year of which he gives this account:

Harry

I have been getting considerable experience, and as a result, I have changed my ideals a lot. I have decided there is no crime in drinking, if done at all sensibly. Of course, the girl I wrote about is at the bottom of all this

change. I am sorry I didn't start getting experience sooner and being more natural. Isn't it rather odd that I should have been such a "Christer" (as they call them here) so late in my life? It certainly was hard to break down those boyhood ideals, but now that I've changed my mind, it is easy to look at things in a natural way.

Verne has gone through a more harassing experience, with low grades at times, and a necessary shift from a state university to a small college. While he has not been active in church work, he still clings to his boyhood religion, better than Harry. Leonard and Richard, who had less positive religious convictions, have continued to become more and more careless in both their religious contacts and moral practices. Richard attended a large university for one year, and since has been studying music entirely.

Richard

I am living I suppose, to fill some little niche in this large world. My objective in life is to be as great a success as is possible, both in business and in other things. I plan to have a family, and make enough money in my early life to retire at the age of from forty-five to fifty. Then, I will enjoy life with my family.

George has taken his college work seriously, graduating this year with Phi Beta Kappa honors. He is preparing to teach. As a high school boy, he was becoming scientific-minded, social in his viewpoints, and a rationalist in theological matters. His development has continued in this same general direction.

Adolph is forging ahead on his medical course. He is not a brilliant student, but he has had no set-

backs. As yet, he has not solved his personal problem of social adjustment to his own satisfaction. Regarding his general views, he writes:

Adolph

To play the game, the whole game and nothing but the game is my motto. By this I mean, not the usual line about "to the last man," etc., but to get into everything worth while. I want to engage in the fullness of life, instead of being a bystander. Heretofore, in my limited range of experience, I have always tried to avoid becoming too interested in anything, so that there never would be a shock of disappointment.

For example, when I went out for track, I did it in a sort of joking manner, never training seriously, so that I would not feel disappointed when I didn't make the letter. I joked about the school, and to the fellows, so that I would not become too attached to them. This seems to be the attitude of many bachelors, for they feel that they have lost the fullness of living. Somehow, I do not seem to have the idea acclaimed by some of making the world a better place. That is, I try when I get a chance, but I do not have a throbbing ambition to renovate everything and everybody. In other words, it is pride in accomplishment, rather than the thought that I am helping the world along.

Nine of the boys in this group, including Ray and Walter, who dropped out of college after one year, went to work. Ray left college on account of his health and his desire to get married. Walter was not able to make satisfactory grades. Both of these young men continue to hold their high ideals, although Walter has not succeeded quite so well as Ray.

Two of the boys, Harold and James, have gone into office work in business establishments. Harold continues to be active in his church, but great changes in questionable directions have taken place in his personal behavior. James is no more active in church than before, but he behaves himself.

The remaining five, Martin, Clarence, Alfred, Frank and Charles are engaged in industrial tasks. Frank is a repair man, Martin a shipping clerk, Alfred a stationary engineer, Clarence an ironworker, and Charles a mechanic. Martin has given up his plans to begin his university career this year. The progress which Frank has made is due to his mechanical aptitudes. Clarence and Charles maintain partial contact with the church, but the others have practically severed their relationships of this character. Martin, however, maintains his idealistic viewpoint on all life issues.

Martin

Life is everything. To be able to make the most of everything is to have a future full of happiness. I first discovered that an aim in life was possible, when I joined the Hi-Y Club. Up to that time, I was drifting. I am living to fulfill the hopes, the faith, the confidence others have in me. I want to so live as to make this world a little better for having lived here.

Charles

What does it profit a man to "weather the storm of Youth in a manly way" and lose certain things that make life livable?

Does it give a man that satisfying sense of accomplishment to have it said of him that he has come

through with but few scars, when he has avoided most of the battles?

The compensation for being good—after all, is that enough? Would you rather have the reward of being called "good" by some adult, or the satisfying knowledge that you had a hell of a time?

Do people admire a jelly-fish more than they do a shark? Which man would you prefer, the one who had life handed him on a silver platter, or one who has made his little world whirl so fast that everyone that looked got dizzy?

I told you, I believe, that I don't run around much and that I have but few friends here where I am now. Perhaps you can guess why.—October, 1930.

Alfred at the close of the day's toil takes off his overalls, washes the grime from his hands, dresses up and goes out to attend the opera, a high-class theater, or some cultural lecture, or spends the evening reading a copy of one of the latest non-fiction books.

With all of the data in hand regarding these young men, it seems safe to say that every one of them at present retains the same relative position in college life, or in his economic group, which was his in high school. If he found great difficulty in getting along in social groups then, that problem still baffles him.

PART V
SOME CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER IX

METHOD OF STUDY

Once upon a time, a fox and a wolf agreed to hunt up some aids and engage in combat. The wolf arrived at the Salt Spring first, accompanied by a wild boar and a bear. From the top of a near-by tree, which he was using as a crow's nest, the bear reported that he could see no signs of an approaching enemy. As it was a sultry day, he lay down between the branches and went to sleep. The wild boar found a cool spot in the tall grass and the wolf curled up asleep at the base of the tree. Soon the fox came up with a cat and dog for allies. Pretty soon, the cat spied an ear sticking out of the grass, and thinking it was a mouse, pounced upon it. The boar to whom the ear belonged was so frightened that he ran for his life. In the excitement, the cat became frightened, ran up the tree, and sprang into the face of the bear. He rolled over and fell to the ground, landing on top of the wolf. So it is these "ears that look like mice" which all too frequently explain queer, unexpected turns of human behavior most clearly.

Social psychology finds much of value to learn even from mistaken subjective reactions concerning

individuals. Here is a boy so insistent upon a place of prominence in all phases of extracurricular activities that he is a nuisance. A mistaken notion that he is better than other folks, which has developed into a superiority complex, may be the sufficient explanation. Again, take the backward boy who cannot do himself justice. An overdone caution lest he be unable to keep his end up, which has been allowed to develop into an inferiority complex, may supply the clue to the right treatment of his case.

Boys seldom talk about these inward aspects of personality, but even the boys who talk least break through this secretiveness at times in composing their letters and life histories. In this present investigation, more than one thousand letters were received from the twenty boys selected from the three hundred correspondents who contributed the major portion of the data used here. This device for securing data on a problem in sociology was first employed by William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecke, in 1919, in the preparation of their book entitled, *The Polish Peasant.*

Details Regarding the Method of the Study

At the beginning of this study, a thousand mimeographed letters were addressed to as many high school boys, selected at random from mailing lists of those who had attended State Older Boys' Conferences in various sections of the country with a request for as personal an account as they cared to give of their experiences in connection with the conferences. Plain paper and envelopes were used. About two hundred replied. Later, when it came to

securing additional correspondents, leaders were asked for lists of boys who had been in camp or who were members of Hi-Y Clubs. An effort was made to induce all of the boys to continue corresponding, and about one hundred did so for the two-year period. Twenty complete series of letters, written by as many boys, were selected to be presented as the basic materials in this study. They were given the preference because (1) their self-revelations seemed the most suggestive, and (2) because they represented the widest variety among the different types of boys. A common boy's name has been assigned to each series for the information of the reader, but the actual identity of these boys has been carefully guarded.

These twenty boys differ from one another in background and points of view. They are located in different communities, one of the boys coming from a very well-to-do home, several from middle-class homes or homes of professional men, and a number are the sons of day laborers. One of the boys is Jewish, another Catholic, many are Protestant, and several are unconnected with any church. Certain of them are fundamentalists, several are liberals, and two appear to be classifiable as agnostics.

Primarily this study is a presentation of the psycho-social mechanisms of twenty boys, and applies to the hundreds of thousands in the general high school group only to the extent that these boys may be true representatives of that big army. On this point, William I. Thomas, says:

> We did not feel entitled to transfer definite conclusions from one society to other societies, to claim that the

socio-psychological laws—or what seems to be laws—found in studying the Polish peasant are also applicable to the American business man, to the Jew, to the Italian peasant, or even to the Polish country noble or bourgeois, without having previously investigated the Polish peasant communities. Our work does not pretend to give any definite and universally valid sociological research; it merely claims to be a monograph, as nearly complete as possible under the circumstances, of a limited social group at a certain period of its evolution, which may suggest studies of other groups, more detailed and more perfect methodically, thus helping the investigation of modern living societies to rise above its present stage of journalistic impressionism and preparing the ground for the determination of really exact general laws of human behavior.[1]

The whole mass of data has been subjected to analysis and the material arranged with regard to such main areas of boy life as athletics, the home, religion and the like. As here presented, these monographs constitute largely introductions to each of these subjects. No claim to completeness is made for them; they are intended rather to be suggestive of the need of further researches in each of these several fields.

Instructions to the Boys

From the very beginning, it was necessary to coach the boys on "how" to differentiate the pertinent from the irrelevant in describing their experiences. The content, however, of the letters was left to the boy's own powers of observation and judgment. In this way, the pitfalls of the questionnaire

[1] Thomas, William I., *The Polish Peasant*, p. 1822-23.

method were avoided. After a boy's statement of some chapter of his experience had been received, it was necessary, at times, to question him concerning it, either to secure details or to be sure of understanding him.

For instance, when the following was received from Verne, he was asked to be more specific in regard to what he meant by "lead me wrong."

Verne

I've always had some kind of a chum throughout my life. If we would move, I would always find some playmate. Now, I regret some of the fellows I chummed around with. At grade school, I got in with some fellows, especially one called "Jimmie." We got pretty "thick." I was always helping him with his work and he with mine. I knew he would lead me wrong, but somehow I did not have courage enough to "throw" him.

His reply was as follows:

Verne

You are always telling me that I'm too vague. I guess the reason is that never before have I written to people like you want me to write you. At times, I'm a little scared to say things, but I hope I'll get over it after awhile.

When asked to write in confidence even about the things he was "a little scared to say," he again replied:

Verne

I'm frightened about the things that must be frankly told. As I said before, you are the first one to whom I have said the things I say. I don't even tell Ray the

things I tell you. I guess it's bashfulness more than being scared.

In some cases, they may have been offended, but most of the boys welcomed suggestions and comments on their letters.

Ray

Must close, will try the topic on leadership. I hope I can give you something good, but it is hard for me to give them, as you would like them, in story form.

Charles

Maybe this write-up on my "chums" will not suit you, but I've given my best efforts to it, and I hope you will not be too disgusted with it. Maybe it isn't frank enough, or perhaps, it is not full enough, but I'm sending it anyway.

Sometimes the boys confined their story to straight description, and they failed to indicate the nature of their own impressions and subjective reactions to the occasion.

Henry

Our morning swim was next in line. First, we had a beginners' swim. After this, the whistle blew, and we all went in for a regular swim. After the swim, we all cleaned our cabins in competition for a cabin banner. I am not exaggerating much, when I say that you could blow in the corners and find little dust. Even in the rest period, which followed dinner, there was plenty to do. There were the boats, tennis courts, horseshoe courts, and plenty of good books to read.

Negatively, of course, it may be inferred that this

letter indicates, as far as it goes, that Henry does not belong to the peculiarly introspective type, that he is group-minded and possesses more than an average sense of responsibility, etc. However, it has seemed best to use here as data for conclusions only actual expressions of the boys concerning their opinions, reactions and ways of thinking. Later, Henry's letters changed in content completely, that is from formal objective statements, to intimate details and evaluations.

In the following document, the concrete particulars on which the conclusions which it expresses are based are practically omitted altogether.

It is certainly swell here at the conference. It is most inspiring. Mr. A. and Mr. B have spoken. They are both very fine and there is more to come. I am in a group headed by Mrs. E., who tells us problems of love and sex from the woman's point of view. This is most interesting. The singing is great. The grounds are certainly appropriate.[2]

Ralph was given first rank among all the boys for his contribution to the project. He describes in vivid word pictures how it felt to be put "through the mill" in camp, first as an older boy and then as a leader. He gives the inside story of his experience with a girl in the following:

Ralph

She came to camp again the next Sunday. How glad I was. She must have told her mother that she wanted to be with me that afternoon, for they stayed longer and busied themselves with other things. We went canoeing

[2] Document No. 4.

at about one o'clock and didn't come in until five. Then she said, "Let the wind blow us in, so we won't get there too fast." Though I didn't say so, I knew I loved her. We confided in each other. I told her of my dream girl and how it affected me and how real it seemed. I told her that she seemed like the girl in the dream.

She had heard our church service under the tree that Sunday and said that I led the singing well, and that she loved to hear me sing "In the Garden." It is still her favorite song and mine. Could she be my best friend? She is—though I don't know whether I'm still hers or not.

As the correspondence proceeded, it was checked up carefully in order to call attention to any topics such as chums, girl friends, athletics, leadership, teachers, or religion on which that particular boy had not yet expressed himself fully. However, in many other cases, the boys themselves took the initiative.

Henry

The subject I am writing on is not on the list you suggested, because it is a peculiar topic. I know you would like the other topics first, but I think I should let you know about this problem I have been up against.

Harold

In your letter, you said these words, "It is very likely that you have not written at all about some very important influences in your life. If so, you should add these experiences in detail. Will you let your next letter center around this major item?"

All right, I will, and at the same time, I will expect a little help from you in answering me on this subject. Will you help me? Well, this will be long and tedious,

and hard to write in an understanding way, but make the best of it, please.

Richard

Well, I'd better quit, I'm getting radical. Write me some of your points on the question of science and religion. I've been since the 20th writing this letter, and now it is the 27th.

John

Do you think the High School should have athletics in the school? Do you think athletics help to build character—games such as football, basketball and baseball?

John kept asking for ideas and suggestions which in itself affords a certain index to his personality. Another time, he seeks this counsel:

John

I am writing from home after coming from the Hi-Y. I have charge of the Bible Study discussion of the Club and our subject was "Father and Son Relationships." I think it was very good and the fellows gained a little something from it. I think the Bible Study is one of the greatest parts of the Hi-Y. All the fellows are gradually getting into the swing of talking a little in open discussion. I wish you could give me hints or suggestions for conducting a good Bible discussion.

Under the circumstances, it is not surprising perhaps that he should put this estimate on the correspondence plan:

John

I hope we can keep up our correspondence. If we

don't, I will miss it extremely. I have been looking through the letters I have received from you. I have kept every letter that I have received from you and will keep them for many a day.

As a general policy, any boy who raised a problem was given, before he received an answer, a chance to express himself fully in regard to a solution. Of course, it was impossible in the end and would have been unfair not to extend help in response to these direct requests. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the nature of the method itself influences certain boys. In the process of describing their experiences in athletics, or in some post of leadership, they are bound to arrive at a new and better understanding of the significance of these experiences for their lives. It forces them to think through the purport of the experience in question with a precision new to them.

Henry

Your letters have inspired me. Last December, you know, I wrote you a letter about my life ambition. I wrote you just after reading the letter that you had sent before. I hadn't planned my life ambition out before. I probably said I did but I didn't. I planned my life ambition right there with pen in hand, putting down words to you. Your letter put me in a mood to think, and I wrote what I thought.

Ralph

I was very thankful for the letter I received from you, because I was wondering if there ought not to be some kind of follow-up work after the conference. I believe

that a conference with no follow-up is like a "blush"—it is momentary and then fades.

Proof of the helpfulness of letters to a boy is shown in the following document, which was received by a Boys' Worker, who had corresponded on the basis of only a chance acquaintance for about two years:

When I was a lad you did for me what comparatively few men do for a young fellow. You showed an interest in me and carved into my boyish heart something which could never cause me to forget you. I have come in contact with very, very few men who have given to me the personal touch which a young fellow needs and yearns for. You gave it to me. Because of this, I cannot forget even though I have partly forgotten how you look. You may have forgotten me, until I ask you to recall the young fellow who spoke to you at the Nagawicka Ski Tournament twelve years ago. Then we wrote to each other for a few years after.[3]

In the correspondence under review here little or no conscious attempt was made to prescribe to or control the thinking of the boys. In some cases, nevertheless, very wholesome results were incidentally obtained:

Verne

You can talk about inspirations. Why, I have walked twice as straight since I read your letter. We're going to have a real conversation through the mail!

An effort was made to call the attention of the boys to interests in life which they might be neglecting. The plan of assigning topics, such as, "Your

[3] Document No. 1.

Home Life" proved unsatisfactory. It was found necessary to present a matter of this kind with considerable detail as follows:

Did you ever think of how dependent a fellow is upon his home? Most boys your age, and it used to be the same with me, think they are quite independent. They want "to do as they please." I know some boys who stopped to figure it out and were surprised by the extent to which they were content to be influenced by their parents. They found that the foods they liked best were the kinds that mother ordered, and that the way they spent much of their money was determined by what father suggested. Their interests, ambitions, religious notions, political ideas, even their friends were all determined, in a greater or lesser degree, by the attitudes of father and mother. To be sure every so often, they got into a battle at home about matters on which they had some different notions from their parents, such as the folks wanting them to go to Sunday school, when the bunch with whom they traveled, ridiculed the idea.

If you are in a humor for something interesting to do, write out the story of some of your home experiences and how you have been influenced by them. Perhaps you were influenced most by your brothers and sisters, or you may feel that you have not been influenced to any great extent at all. Be sure to make clear the way your mother converts you to her ideas, and then, the way dad does it. Give illustrations. And, of great importance, too, is the way you "work" your parents, or, in certain things, do as you please, even when you know it is not entirely in harmony with their wishes. Make it a good long letter, for you will find the attractions of this experiment will grow upon you as you proceed.

When the interest developed by certain boys war-

ranted it, they were asked to write a more complete and unified account of their personal history. While the response was not unanimous, many of the boys took to the idea.

Clarence

When the Christmas excitement is over, I will write you the story of my life as near as I can. I would like very much for you to give me a personality sketch—because I have often observed other people's personalities. I often wonder how I look myself, although it just dawned upon me a year or two ago.

Ralph

I had intended to take about six months to do my life history in, because I wanted to do it well, but since you want it soon I'll have it ready. I had been carrying a note book and a pencil with me, so that whenever I remembered anything of my past, I could jot it down for reference.

For a long time, the boys were kept in ignorance of my own identity. Eventually, however, I began to meet some of them personally, and in the end became acquainted with all but four of the twenty.

In nearly every instance, photographs of themselves were supplied by the boys. Quite rapidly, a feeling of fellowship developed which made the task seem a friendly quest, instead of a labored cross-examination.

Fred

Gosh, you seem to be such a good friend. I believe God has got us together, because you are in one state and I in another. I want always to be your friend, be-

cause you made me see more of life. You made me ponder over it in such a wonderful way. It is my aim sometime to see you, for you have been so wonderful to me. Both of us are getting something out of it. I would never have thought of many things, but you made me do it.

John

I don't believe we need an introduction, for I feel like I know you already. I would like to spend a day, or even half a day, talking with you and hiking around the mountains. I hope this salutation is O.K. with you but after writing as I have been, I feel that you are a friend and I call my friends by their first name. If this is all right with you, I will use the familiar heading after this.

Harold

You know, it has hardly occurred to me until just lately, how little we know about each other. Just think of your writing to a person for about a couple of months without knowing anything about him! So I have decided that I will inform you (that's too formal)—tell you some more about my life. I am also going to do something which may be a surprise to you. I am going to send to you in this letter a kodak picture of my cousin and myself. They are really not very becoming, but I have no others.

In another letter he writes:

Harold

I'm not a baby. Neither am I a mama's boy. And I don't consider that I am now even after I shed tears on reading your letter. It may have been tears of a part-understanding—maybe tears of joy—tears of perplexity —and then, again, it might have been just that desire

that overwhelms a person's emotions at times and makes him feel some unknown power—and perhaps that emotion was your understanding, unseen friendship.

In establishing the first contacts, two different appeals were used, one to the pride which they ought to take in being picked to act as the reporter for their group, and the other to the opportunity thus presented to render a distinct piece of service. Regarding this first point the boys said:

Martin

Well, here I am with this bunch of papers before me. I look like a prosperous young man. But fellows like to be in my circumstances. They like to have someone take an interest in them. They like to be given a chance to open up and display their views.

Leonard

This is a very long letter, but I love to write them. I feel so big.

Donald

When I received a letter from you, I realized what I was losing by not writing, for I really have received more good from your letters than you have received from me.

The service appeal proved quite as effective with this particular group of boys.

Martin

If you think I can be of service to you, do not hesitate to call on me.

Frank

I am glad to hear the other letter was of value to you and some value to the science of the future. I hope this one is also.

Evaluation of the Method

Every method of investigating human nature and personality has its points of strength and weakness, and the use of letters to secure such data is not an exception. Some may think that this method appeals only to a certain type of boy. It may seem reasonable to expect, for instance, that a more ready response might be obtainable from the mental or literary type, or the boy who is in trouble. As it happened, however, several of these boys attended technical schools, and some of the others were by no means brilliant students. In fact, a few of them were failures in some of their school work. On the other hand, the admission must be freely granted that there are individuals who do not care to write letters. Their reactions to such a proposal may be emotional distaste. Whatever the explanation, it is the hardest thing in the world for them to write. Something of the same distaste may be felt toward questionnaires, personal interviews, and other similar methods.

The fact that a large proportion of the boys did not persevere to the end of the two year period, may be indicative of defects in the method or that it gave rise to negative reactions on the part of some boys as it proceeded. After all, however, the outstanding difficulty is probably the amount of time required. These boys were leaders in high school life which kept them very busy.

Harold

Did you think that I had deserted you? I guess you have been thinking this for a long time. But I will put you easy on that point right away. I have not. How's that? In your last letter you asked me what I did with my time.

James

I am very sorry for not writing sooner. I want to apologize for my delay. I am carrying six subjects at school, and working four hours a day besides, so I do not have a whole lot of time to myself. I hope you keep on writing for I enjoy hearing from you. I will make a special effort to write more often.

Fred

This work to me is a pleasure, but it happens that I got a little too much of everything in the last three or four weeks. My only excuse for not writing is "work." I am in the Class Play, which will continue for a period of five weeks.

Charles

The fact of the matter is, I'm a senior, and this is my last year. With the exams, the annual, a class day program, a yard to cut that contains four-fifths of an acre, and a job at a store on Saturdays—well, you can see for yourself that I have enough to do. I'll get that out as soon as I can, because I don't want to be taken off the active list.

Harry

I kept putting off writing this letter for almost two weeks. When, like writing this letter, I am assigned verbally or just obliged to do something, I seem to put it

off indefinitely. I received your letter and read it. It has been on the library table ever since. When I pass it, I say, "Well, I've got an enormous amount of homework to-night." I'll be going out Friday night, and Saturday night. There'll be gym Saturday morning, a football game Saturday afternoon, but some fellows would call, and we'd probably take a walk. Then there's homework to do Sunday night, and when does the letter fit in! To-day is a holiday, so I'm writing this letter and doing my homework this morning, and going to a football game this afternoon, and soon—if holidays don't happen along I'll be lost.

One of the very best of these correspondents continued for a period of six months and then dropped out because he was too driven. He wrote:

I have read the outline material you sent and I have thought about it, but I find it impossible to write. When I consented to write, I never dreamed that I would be asked to write such an enormous quantity as you desire and suggest in your recent letter. I am exceptionally busy with school work and activities. I hereby request that I be released from this research work.[4]

Some boys went to quite the other extreme. They answered at once and expressed regret if our replies to them were delayed. One says:

I hope my last letter was not so unsatisfactory that you thought it not worth answering. If you did not receive it, please let me know. The reason I am asking this is because one of my boy friends got an answer to his letter, and I have not. I hope this letter will renew our friendship and communication.[5]

[4] Document No. 2.
[5] Document No. 3.

Certain boys spoke frankly about the difficulty which they found in putting their thoughts on paper. They were unable to find the right words or frame work in which to express their emotions and ideas. On the other hand, if the method of conversation had been used to secure the same data from the boy, there would be the danger of spoiling it to a degree by inadvertently rephrasing it in adult language. One of the chief virtues of this correspondence method is that the boy's views are secured in the boy's own words. The comments of the boys themselves on this point are revealing:

Charles

I don't think very fast. Undoubtedly there is something wrong with "my attic." During the day, I think of a million-and-one-things, but when I write, my thoughts are gone. They are like a humming bird. As long as you don't go too close, it will continue to hover over the flower. So with my thoughts. As soon as I come to the point of recording them in black and white, they speedily fly away.

Harry

Very often since I have been writing to you, I say to myself, "Well just how can I explain that feeling or sensation?" Then, I figure out something that I'll write as an answer to the question when you send it.

Frank

I'll have to apologize for the writing, but I wrote as the thoughts came and it was too fast. I could expand on some of the thoughts, but I believe you will be busy enough trying to translate my "lingo" as is.

The way in which the emotional element may creep into a letter is reflected in the document below from a boy who was kept at home one night for punishment. He found a sort of emotional catharsis, or outlet in spending his time writing a letter. He longs for someone to talk with, and yet is afraid that those in whom he confides will either ridicule him or not understand.

Charles

The lad of whom I have been speaking is the one sitting here. He is now being punished, for staying out after 10:30, by having taken from him the privilege of going out at all. That's bad on him too for there's a big game to-morrow night. But he "burnt" himself, now let him sit on the blister. He was selected as a delegate for the "Older Boys' Conference." Has been a delegate to three in all. Took an active part in the one and entertained in his home two fine fellows from a near-by city. He made pledges but broke them. Is he sorry? Yes, but is trying again. Would you consider him a failure?

Many letters which Charles wrote were signed "Waiting for an answer." One time there was an interval of five months between his letters. Then he wrote:

Charles

If I could be of any help, I would be glad to do so, and maybe I won't be such a "quitter" this time. I will give you my alibi later on, and tell you why I fell down on the job. You might say that I lost interest, but I didn't.

Other boys speak of this same sense of relief and release obtained from confessional writing:

Walter

I am afraid that I have been talking about one girl too much, but my mind is on that one girl at present and it makes me feel better to get it out of my system.

Martin

Perhaps this was not an appropriate subject to write on, but I felt an overwhelming desire to communicate to others my cherished hopes and a full explanation of them. Having done this, I feel freer and happier.

Boys have a reputation for speaking without reserve. The value of the study depended on this trait quite as much as on the ability of boys to recount their experiences vividly. Before the method was put to the test, considerable doubt was expressed by some regarding the possibility of securing frankly written statements and descriptions from boys concerning themselves. Experience proved quite the contrary to be the case, even when it came to the suggestion that the boys write out a complete life history.

Harold

I hope I haven't offended anyone, and if I have I didn't mean anything. I was asked to write from my heart, and I have, and I am sorry to have had to make so many criticisms, but it was what I really thought.

Henry

I am glad to help you out. You said I owed you a letter, but the fact is I sent one about my love affairs and was waiting for an answer. I hope that letter didn't go to anyone else, because there certainly was some scandal in it.

Charles

Say, writing my life history would appeal to me, but I don't know how and where to start. I am interested and you can mail me your suggestions. I doubt if there is 20,000 words in my life history. You can have my past if there is any possible way to get it on paper. I believe that it can all be put into one keg. I expect my cellar needs cleaning and you are going to raise a fog when you start.

Leonard

By the way, you, my father, and my leader at camp, are the only ones I dare speak freely with. I'm sort of scared, or something, you know.

The question may be raised whether the boys "tell the truth and shame the devil," or rationalize and "make up" replies which they think will please or satisfy. This does happen at times, without a doubt, but where the correspondence is carried on at great length with a boy on whom some check-up is possible, the risk of being misled is not serious.

Harry

It may appear that I have been spinning a fine old yarn to you, but, believe me, I am telling you more than I have ever told anyone else. Perhaps, it is because you are so far away, or that a fine mutual understanding has sprung up between us, or because I have faith in you, or that you are really interested in me.

Ralph

I didn't care to bluff anything because it made very little difference to me what you thought of it. I cared more for what I thought of myself and what people who

know me care, so I wrote on the topics truthfully. Then I'm not in the habit of bluffing.

Frank

Excuse my mistakes. I don't read my letters over for fear I might be tempted to change them. I realize that what you want is the truth and not a made-up story, so I write my thoughts as they come, seal the letter and mail it. Sometimes I regret things I have written, but after it is mailed, I can't change anything I have said.

It is a well-known fact that even people of substance on the witness stand find difficulty in remembering all the data pertinent to the case and in stating it correctly. Without a doubt, the boys embroidered their stories somewhat at times, to make themselves appear to a little better advantage. Every person has a right, however, to tell "his side of the story," and this group of boys were given an opportunity to do just that. None of this contributed material, however, gives any indication that a boy felt that he was on the witness stand, and so forced to defend his actions. Unintentionally, the boys did so at times; but in the main, they just described episodes in their lives as memory reported them. For this reason, the facts stated are true for the boy and the point of view of the boy is considered the thing of chief importance in this study. In one case a boy did not tell just why he did not graduate because his failure involved cheating. In two instances, the boys made no reference to the economic struggle at home or to its inferior social status. As a rule, however, it is true that boys will reveal their true selves in letters to an extent which their most inti-

mate adult friends do not realize. The importance of getting at the inside point of view of the boy can only be presented in a convincing manner by citing instances from real life.

Henry

I played baseball with these fellows, but when it came to football, somehow or other I went back to the big fellows. My mother was very much averse to my playing this game. I was twelve years old then, and weighed about eighty pounds. They all weighed a hundred pounds or more. I used to tackle players twice my size, and catch forward passes that had gone astray, and dash through small holes that they had left unguarded. I was a freshman at high school when the question of track came up. I was an "all around man" here. I was equally punk at everything.

In recounting his experience in football and track, it is only human of Henry not to picture himself a complete dub. The testimony of the coach might not bear out his claim that he "tackled players twice his size," or that he "dashed through unguarded holes." On the other hand, this is the kind of stuff which he tells, when he gets home from school, to a boy chum. On the basis of his own conception of the various rôles he plays, dressed up a bit though it be, he lives his life. The point is not whether he is really "a flop" as an athlete, a failure with the girls or a success in his studies, but that he lives his life on the basis of his own conceptions of himself in these and other rôles which he plays. This is a most important determinant of his personality.

This principle of interpretation is emphasized in

the following quotation from Professor Ernest W. Burgess of the University of Chicago:

> The social images, these conceptions of ourselves and of others, which Dr. Trigant Burrows regards as nefarious illusions, seem to many of us the very substance of human nature and personality. Surely our reflexes, our instincts, and our endocrine secretions are not the distinctive characteristics of human nature, no matter how greatly they influence it. What is human nature, but the capacity to have social images, to put oneself in the other person's place and look at oneself so far as one is able, in the mirror of the attitudes of the other person? For the study of human nature and personality, the basic reality is just this social image . . . this conception of one's rôle, for it is in his images, his memories, his wishes, his dreams, his illusions, his faiths that a human being really lives. Take from him social images of motherhood and fatherhood, of truth and justice, or immortality and God, and life would not be worth living.[6]

This assemblage of confessional material is full of snapshots of the writers' own conceptions of themselves in the rôles which they play in their homes, in athletics, with girl friends, at church, and in all the other important social situations which make up their lives. Again and again the boys felt impelled to mention that they are putting down more intimate data about themselves than they have ever revealed to anyone heretofore. It is well understood in psychology that people show less reserve sometimes with strangers and tell them facts about themselves which they will hold from members of their family. That explains why a Boys' Worker often

[6] Burgess, Ernest W., *The Family,* Vol. III, p. 8.

knows more about what the boys in his group are thinking than their parents.

Harry

I have said a good many things to you that I have never said to anyone but myself before. Although it sounds like an "I did this and I did that," I just wanted to tell you a few things that I have often thought about, but never had a chance to tell anyone.

Henry

I have tried to tell you everything that interested me. I have told it just as I believe it. I have spoken in a rather egotistical style, but I can speak otherwise for myself when that is required.

These testimonies from the boys as to the way in which this silent form of confession lays bare the deepest personal aspects of boy life prove the value of the method convincingly. It is this newly found power to unbosom, which makes the boy feel that he is being egotistical in relating certain intimate things for the first time.

There is not a single phase of boy life—money, home, sex, school, sport, acquaintances, etc.—which is not discussed by the boys from a variety of angles. Nor was any pressure put on the boys to tell anything that they felt any disposition to withhold. It is well, however, to remember that the life of a boy has two sides like a shield. The side exposed to the world is not so close to his desires, satisfactions and pains as the side hidden from it. It is this hidden interior which this method enables him to disclose. To say that it fosters a tendency to introspection is

a compliment rather than an indictment. While the exterior life of a boy is often a mask which he wears simply in order to make a good impression, every boy has a right to bar the way to regions so private that it would be an impertinence for others to penetrate. Otherwise, he could not live his life freely and spontaneously, but would be tormented by a sense of mingled fears, shame, guilt, and inferiority. Thus, unless this method is used with cautious good judgment, it may do some boys immense harm.

The most fundamental criticism of this method is the charge that it is unscientific to the extent that its data are not subject to check by objective confirmations nor do its results admit of quantitative measurement. When some of the products of their own pens were sent back to the boys to re-read, it was not uncommon to get a reply of this kind:

> To say that I was surprised and interested at my materials is only half describing my feelings after I read your notes. It reads funny to me, yet I recognize every word. I saw my life on a screen, so it seemed to me when I was writing them and had no idea of what I was doing.[7]

The foremost merit of this method is the fact that it does get at the point of view of the boy. It uncovers what he is thinking with all of its accompaniments of personal bias, inaccuracies, and immaturity. These peculiarities make him what he is, however, and explain his actions and constitute the point of departure for the right treatment of his case.

[7] Document No. 5.

A second merit of this method is the fact that its revelations are not unrelated fragments but come to us "framed" in the total setting formed by the sum of the boy's environment. The letters from the boys are peculiarly significant because in them this total social setting is preserved intact.

A third value of great importance is the insight which it affords into the process by which changes are taking place in the reactions and attitudes of a boy, and the knowledge thus obtained of what produces or brings about such changes. A fourth merit springs from the fact that if situations are not described at the time they occur, they can seldom be recalled later on accurately. Knowledge of the experiences and attitudes of high school boys cannot be obtained by asking adults to look back into their boyhood and jot them down. The boy point of view must be gotten at the time. Otherwise, significant details will be missing.

Finally, from the viewpoint of the way a boy should be dealt with, a prime merit of this method is the copious and accurate information which it yields concerning the more intimate life situations with which high school boys in general have to deal, something that even the most careful observations and analyses cannot do half as well. As parents, teachers and Boys' Workers act upon the cues which this abundant and accurate information puts at their service, they should get much better results in character education and personality development.

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